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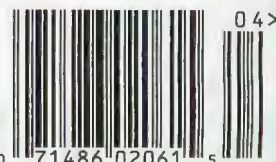
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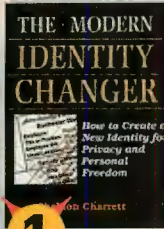


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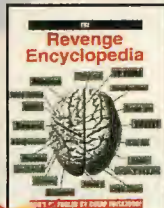
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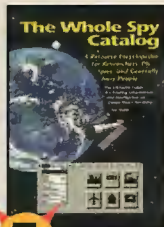
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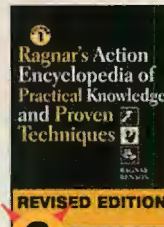
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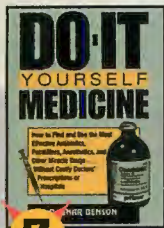
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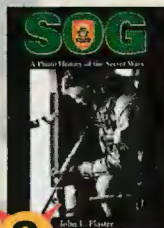
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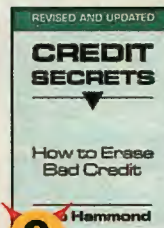
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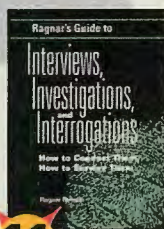
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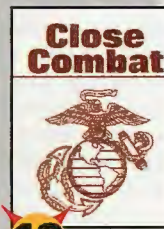
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COMMAND GUIDANCE

by Peter Neves

Berets And Beyond

On 18 October 2000, General Eric Shinseki, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, announced his intention to issue the Black Beret, currently worn exclusively by Rangers serving in the 75th Ranger Regiment and the Ranger Training Brigade, to the entire Army. The wearing of the Black Beret by the entire Army would be a "symbol of unity," the General announced. However, before the end of the next day, a gag order had been placed on the entire United States Army Special Operations Command, effectively silencing any potential for opposition by the greatest concentration of Rangers on active-duty today.

The Beret is not just a hat, but a symbol, as defined by General Shinseki, and is being issued "as an important symbol of our commitment to transform this magnificent army into an objective force with early entry capabilities."

General Shinseki has crossed the threshold of definition for a military award. Amazingly enough, the Black Beret, being issued for merely having a "commitment," is the equivalent of issuing an award for "trying." Isn't it customary to issue awards following the attempted mission so one can gauge results and determine which award is appropriate?

On another note, let's examine what we are "trying to accomplish." The cornerstone of General Shinseki's "transformation" is the Intermediate (or Interim) Brigade Combat Team, which is a medium-weight vehicle brigade, complete with organic weapons systems. In General Shinseki's vision, this new force is capable of deploying worldwide in a 96-hour time frame.

In a recent study, it was determined that the force, as defined and equipped according to standards set by General Shinseki, was deployable in a 9-10-day time frame, or about 235% of the time he stated as doable. Of particular note is that this is due to the tonnage of the personnel

(4,800) and the equipment, vehicles, weapons and support required to get this unit to battle. Accomplishing the goal of making the vehicles "more resistant to RPG7s" will add even more weight to them. The underlying assumption is that our enemy will not advance his portable anti-armor capability beyond the state-of-the-art RPG7.

The need to advance our military's capabilities is not what is in question here, but the manner in which it is accomplished, and the assumptions the modernization is built upon. Just because we can do something does not mean that it should be done. Additional considered force modifications: An exoskeleton system that will allow soldiers to carry more equipment; and a system of integrated personal laptops which are connected to flipdown-visor systems which can convey terrain, position of enemy and friendly forces and all other sorts of data. This system will be connected to video cameras which can allow a soldier to point his weapon around a corner to see the enemy, without exposing himself. Soldiers will need to carry thermite grenades to destroy their equipment on the battlefield, if capture is imminent.

My vision of transformation is a bit different. My vision will cost nothing. Purge select members of the senior Pentagon staff and put leaders in there who would strike a balance that leans toward investing in our soldiers. Put their lives in their own hands, rather than technology's. As much as I love technology, it's not a magic bullet. And this concept is not rocket science.

Peter Neves served in 2/75 Ranger and 1st Special Forces Group. He created the website located at rangerblackberet.com and is president of Milspec Group, Inc.

Readers are encouraged to contact their congressmen to voice their opposition to the Army-wide Black Beret policy. ✂

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Federal Police Ponzi



Ms. Hutchinson's article ("Goodbye, Columbus," February '01) should enlighten citizens how the federal government has been making an end-run around local citizen control of their police.

This also includes the 10th Amendment to the Constitution.

I have seen in my three decades of law enforcement a growing dependency on Federal handouts. This has included everything from uniforms to personnel. Cash-strapped agencies have been forced to accept the Federal money and the strings that go along with it.

What I don't understand is why local governments and citizens do not demand their money returned to them. If the Feds are taking so much money from us in taxes that they can turn around and offer our money back to us in grants, why can't they allow us to keep it in the first place. Sounds like a great ponzi scheme to me.

Robert Burnett, Lieutenant (retired)
Westminster Police Department, California

Local Responsibility



I am writing to respond to the article about how the DOJ has been strong-arming local police departments to fall under its control. First of all I'd like to say you are correct when you say this is alarming and dangerous.

As a citizen I believe that it is the responsibility of the local government to control its police departments and not the DOJ. Adding to that I have to say that a majority of police departments have helped to make the DOJ takeover easier by not properly monitoring the conduct of their officers. My personal opinion is that the local police department is going to have to start policing its [own] force, and its officers can't act like jerks every time they see a minority or a guy with long hair. I live in LA and have not been a victim of this, but I have witnessed it first hand. We have to make sure

Continued on page 14



Guests of South Africa's 44th Parachute Brigade, under the auspices of SOF Senior Foreign Correspondent Rob Krott's MPTI, were part of some 800 jumpers exiting three C-130s in this water jump. MPTI has planned jumps in Holland, Cuba, France, Malaysia and Peru for 2001, with training available for legs.

Books On South Africa

I really enjoy your magazine and, although not a subscriber, I have bought issues that interested me for at least 20 years.

I have a question that I hope you can help me with. I would like to buy some books about South African involvement in the Angola War in 1975 (I was in Operation Savannah). However, most of these books are out of print, but I am hoping that some-

(www.google.com) and search for "South African historical book dealers" or similar key words. Most used or OP book dealers are now on the web, and you can search worldwide in a matter of seconds.

One U.S. distributor of books by several South African publishers (including Covos) that we can recommend is BHB International, 108 East North First Street, Suite G, Seneca, South Carolina 29678; phone: 864-885-9444. Their extensive catalog is free, and they are most helpful.

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WHERE?

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CAN THE PUBLIC ACCESS SCARS?

Yes, it was declassified in part and exposed to the public in 1993, under the name Hostile Control for non-lethal use. It was later combined with more lethal information under the name of SCARS IQS.

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CAUTION: The systems discovered by Jerry L. Peterson and the Direct Action Corporation "Dominate Process Systems™" are based on a cold, calculated system of new sciences that are intended for extreme life-threatening circumstances. They are brutally effective, highly aggressive and absolutely lethal. "Dominate Process Systems" in its totality has never been revealed. SCARS is a subset of this system and remains the Number One protection system in the world.

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our local politicians and senior police officials do their jobs — instead of supporting worthless gun control laws that hurt law-abiding citizens. Because if they don't, soon people will support the efforts of the [federal] government and we will all be the losers.

Thurman Fuller
Via e-mail

Merc Work?



I read with great concern and respect the article about Neall Ellis flying ("Merc Guns in Sierra Leone") in your September and October [2000] issues. I am a Vietnam vet helicopter pilot. I was stationed in I Corp in 1971-72, flying out of Chu Lai with B Company 123rd (Warlords) and out of Marble Mountain near Da Nang with 173rd AHC (Robinhoods).

It makes me sad to see what's going on in Sierra Leone while the rest of the world powers (including the U.S.) stand idly by.

I would like information on how to contact Ellis or the people he works for so that I can offer my services as a pilot. I'm also an FAA licensed aircraft and powerplant mechanic with many years of experience, and could assist in keeping the birds flying.

Thank you in advance for your response.

(Name Withheld)

Your message has been forwarded through channels toward Neall Ellis, but we can't really offer any encouragement. Ellis was working "on a tab" for the Sierra Leone government, and it's moot whether or not he'd ever really get paid. If it's any consolation, since those stories were written, the Brits stepped in and adroitly turned things around, at least temporarily. Now, a good-sized detachment of U.S. Special Forces is in Africa training Nigerians to be UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. We'll just have to wait and see how that turns out.

POC For Southern Cross

Could you please send me information so that I might contact the security team "Southern Cross Security Company ...?"

Mike

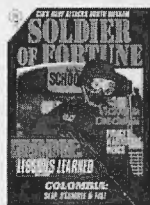
In your last issue you ran an article by A.J. Venter regarding anti-piracy operations in Sierra Leone. The article featured a company called "Southern Cross Security Company." I have been unable to locate any contact information for them ...

Matt

Al Venter replies: E-mail is the ONLY

way. There's no mail delivery in that war-racked state. Cobus Claassens can be contacted at cobus@hotmail.com.

Patriots In Strategic Reserve?



I have been delayed in my reading, and have only just read the May letter from a reader to the effect that the NRA is, currently, unworthy of his membership. His argument is that there are more firearm restrictions today, than before the NRA became politically active. He concludes that the NRA is, therefore, ineffective, and he will join when they are effective.

My understanding of this letter is that the correspondent sees himself as an extremely strategic reserve and as soon as the battle is won, he will join. I look forward to his membership.

Kevin L. Jamison, Attorney at Law
Gladstone, MO

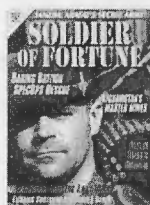
Kaufman's Lives

I am an Air Force vet. I have lost the address to a military supply store in the west. It's called "Kaufman's West." Perhaps you can help me with the address — lost it when I moved. It's been in your magazine before, but haven't seen it in recent issues. Any help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks!

Robert A. Przytarski

Their current address is: Kaufman's West, Dept. SOF, 1660 Eubank, Albuquerque, NM 87112; phone: 505-293-2300.

Mayaguez Cargo



Read with interest the article about the *Mayaguez* in the January issue ("The *Mayaguez* Revisited," by Will Cadence). Some questions: It was carrying 274 odd containers when the Khmer Rouge flunkies took control. Just what was in these containers? Weapons, military equipment? What was its destination? Was any cargo missing after the U.S. re-boarded it and took control? I find what stories don't say to be the most intriguing part of reading news reports and magazine articles. Great magazine.

Nathan
via e-mail

Good questions. We queried Will Cadence and here's the story: The

*Mayaguez was carrying general cargo, mostly merchandise for the PX/BX stores at the Naval base in Sattahip, Thailand, plus some supplies of no particular significance for the U.S. Embassy. No containers were opened and apparently no goods taken. The Khmer forced Capt. Miller to open the ship's safe, which contained some \$23,000 in cash, and they didn't take a dime. Rumors have persisted that the ship was carrying "all the classified material about the war from the embassy in Saigon," but Capt. Miller flatly says that is not true. And that stands to reason, as the fall of Saigon was no surprise, with plenty of time for sensitive material to be evacuated by other means, or destroyed. Apparently, the *Mayaguez* was a fairly innocuous vessel, at the wrong place at the wrong time, and the Khmer Rouge were certifiably crazy.*

Got Eggs?

I just wanted to thank you folks at *SOF* for having the eggs to print the truth and stand by it. Our government has fallen to wimps and political pussies. I served five years in the Marine Corps and appreciate our rights and freedoms.

Tom Jurkiewicz
via e-mail

Can Do — So Do It



I read with amusement the note in the December 2000 issue from Seabee C.J. Laidlaw concerning his disappointment at the lack of stories on the Navy Seabees. Interestingly, he failed to supply you with one, didn't he? I can tell you from experience that if someone served in the Navy Seabees at any time during its existence at the early stages of WWII, that person does have a story to tell! I believe ol' C.J. missed that point.

Send me a way to contact him and perhaps I can convince him to compile a ditty or two for us all to read.

Can Do!


David W. Schill SCB (E8), USNR
(Seabees Vietnam 1970-71)
Newsletter Editor
Vietnam Era Seabees
P.O. Box 36781
Richmond, VA 23235

We printed your whole address, so Seabees will know about your newsletter, and how to contact you. And we're telling them to tell you to consider writing some salty Seabee war stories. Never thought we'd see the Can Do guys pass the buck like this! ✂

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I Was There

by Nelson Rand

ON THE OFFENSIVE

“Nature is so beautiful,” the Major says as he looks into the clear sky atop a jungle mountain on the border of Thailand and Burma. “But human nature isn’t. We are wiping each other out.” From his hammock, the commander makes the final preparations for an attack on a Burmese military camp a few kilometers away. Major Ner Dah, of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), the military arm of Burma’s largest ethnic minority group, will lead his battalion to take the mountain camp and force the 30 or so Burmese troops who stay there to flee or die.

The surrounding area may be beautiful, like the commander says, but the forces of human nature continue to plague this area like a chronic disease.

The Karen, who rightfully lay claim to this land, have been fighting for the last half-century for an independent homeland. The Burmese government would rather wipe them out and keep their ter-

ritory than to grant them independence. In the words of Maj. Ner Dah, “The Burmese government wants the Karen people to survive only in museums.” So the Karen continue their struggle knowing that surrender would be fatal. “We have no choice but to fight”, says 21-year old Sergeant Nay Wa. “If we lay down our arms and surrender, the Burmese will swallow us up.”

Since their heyday in the 1980s, the Karen National Liberation Army has seen their areas of control diminish significantly. Now they are reduced to small enclaves along the Thai border and operate out of mobile jungle bases.

Every year, the beginning of the dry season sparks a Burmese government offensive to try to defeat the Karen once and for all. But the beginning of this dry season has the Karen playing the role of the attacker.

From the mountain top along the border, soldiers of Ner Dah’s 201st battalion prepare for the attack. Weapons are cleaned, loaded, and checked. Ammunition is divided up and given out sparingly. Reconnaissance of the nearby area reveals that the Burmese are not around in the jungle — they are waiting in their camp like sitting ducks.

The next morning, the soldiers and porters of Ner Dah’s battalion clear up their jungle camp where they have stayed for the last four days, gear up, and line up before moving out. Armed with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades, the soldiers are led through a prayer and given words of encouragement from their leader. One by one, the soldiers proceed into the jungle on a trail that will lead them to the enemy camp.

The desire and dedication of the Karen people is seen in the jungle where they wage their war: porters wearing flip-flops carrying mortar shells in a bamboo basket strapped to their back, a 42-year-old veteran guerrilla who hasn’t seen his wife in 11 years, a 13-year-old boy whose M16 is almost as big as he is ... “Revolution,” says one veteran soldier, “this is the life of the Karen people.”

The sun beats down on the jungle canopy and the soldiers rest in silence. They are in enemy territory, about a 15-minute walk away from the camp they intend to attack. A lead group scouts out the enemy area and penetrates the front entrance of the camp. The scouts go unnoticed by the Burmese troops who are 300 meters away in their main compound.

Ironically, a trench that the Burmese made for defending their camp is now the shelter for the Karen attackers. Orders are given for the rest of the battalion to move in once the camp’s entrance has



The Karen, who rightfully lay claim to this land, have been fighting for the last half-century for an independent homeland. The Burmese government would rather wipe them out and keep their territory than to grant them independence.

been successfully secured.

By dusk, everyone is in position and the soldiers use the shelter of darkness to set up the 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns. In the distance, voices of the Burmese soldiers can be heard — they are laughing and singing. They won't be laughing or singing in the morning.

The night is clear and beautiful. A full moon lights up the night sky and brings a feeling of calm. One soldier looks into the distance where the Burmese are sleeping and says in an almost apologetic manner, "All soldiers are good. We are people of peace with a misunderstanding." His words are striking at the moment; tomorrow he will try to deliver them to their graves.

Dawn rolls in and with it the explosions of mortars, rockets, and the sound of heavy machine-gun fire. It is a Karen wake-up call to the Burmese. The mountains erupt with the thundering sound of battle. The 30 or so Burmese troops don't stand much of a chance against the battalion of Karen invaders. From the trench, three machine gunners take aim at the confused and surprised Burmese troops a few hundred meters away. Burmese rockets and mortars scream overhead but land off in the distance. The Karen continue the onslaught for an hour-and-a-half before two attack groups of machine gunners storm the final hill to the camp. They are urged on by yelling soldiers in the back who give them cover with mortars and heavy machine guns. The Burmese have no choice but to flee.

The human cost of the attack is seen in a desolate bunker where a Burmese soldier lies with a bullet hole through his head. Hate is a powerful emotion, and hate is prevalent on this morning. Anger is taken out on the dead Burmese soldier — anger created from a lifetime of war and half-a-century of persecution. "Bloody fool!" screams one soldier referring to the fallen man as he unloads three rounds of his AK47 into the dead man's chest. There is no mercy, no compassion, only anger and hatred.

A group of Karen soldiers pursue the fleeing Burmese troops and open fire into the jungle where they are escaping. Another unit of Karen soldiers has already laid mines on the trail and they will try

to cut them off from the other side. In the meantime, the successful attackers raid the camp for supplies. Thousands of rounds of bullets are found along with rockets, mortar shells, and a few weapons. Besides the military equipment, maps, notebooks, and personal artifacts are searched through and taken. An unmailed letter is found, dropped by one of the fleeing Burmese soldiers. It is a letter to his sister pleading her to look after their mother as he is too poor and far away. A Karen soldier reads this and perhaps realizes that this soldier is human, just like him, but separated by circumstances. "It is not people who are bad, it is governments," says one Karen woman who reads the captured letter a few days later with tears rolling down her face.

The captured supplies are gathered up and ready to be carried down the mountain by the same porters who carried Karen supplies up the day before. A soldier takes out his lighter and proceeds to burn down the camp's thatch-roofed huts. "Bye-bye," he says, with a smile on his face.

The youngest Karen soldier in the group, who is 13-years-old, stares at the lifeless body of the dead man in the bunker. He stares curiously for a very long time, like he is trying to comprehend something that he is too young to know about. There is no anger or hatred in his face; perhaps he is too young to have been inflicted by such powerful emotions yet. But he has already taken part in the horror of war — the destruction of man, and surely his innocence is lost forever. It is only a matter of time before he is the one pumping rounds into dead men.

Knowing that a Burmese counterattack is imminent in the next few days, once they get reinforcements, the Karen attackers take all of the camp's supplies, mine the area, and retreat. A few days later, three battalions of Burmese troops retake the camp without a fight, but find it empty and burnt — and scattered with landmines.

The 201st battalion of the Karen National Liberation Army has successfully started this year's dry season.

Nelson Rand resides in Southeast Asia. This is his first piece for Soldier Of Fortune. ✕

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ADVENTURE QUARTERMASTER

Hennessy Hammock

Among the legions of self-serving tinhorns who parade by with a sandwich board claiming they have built a better mousetrap, a few actually have. Now, such genuine improvements are thinly sprinkled through the stew of human inventiveness, and if something really is better, you can expect to pay more for the upgrade. Sometimes, a lot more, even more than the improvement is worth.

In general, something that performs better *is* worth more, and the difference in investment can be money well spent. But only rarely is the upgraded item actually cheaper.

Once in a great while, someone who really understands a need combines a talent for design with a knowledge of modern materials and comes up with something that is well worth paying more for. It's usually somebody who has had a lot of experience with the competing stuff that "sort-of" worked. For instance, the Hennessy Hammock: the best thing to come between two trees since people got tired of sleeping on the ground thousands of years ago.

This is another of those rare, "Well, it's about time; why didn't I think of that?" masterpieces of functional design that address an ill which has probably bugged bazillions of people for hundreds of generations, but has never been corrected because the problem wasn't life-threatening.

And although not a design feature, one of the best aspects of the Hennessy Hammock is, even though it is twice as good as the competition, it costs about half as much. The maker says the Hennessy Hammock is half the weight, half the price and has twice the features of other quality personal shelters. Immodest, but spot on.

There are a number of unique features, any one of which would prompt this fern hopper to opt for the Hennessy. For instance, just getting into a regular hammock is a hassle — especially if you want to drink your cuppa cawfee or eat your dinner in peace from bugs and try to take it with you. Or if you try to remove your muddy boots rather than jump in with them on: Try sitting on the edge of a common hammock to do this and invariably it flips and dumps your gear upside down — or out in the mud. The Hennessy, however, is an "easy enter" through the bottom. You simply walk in to the middle of the hammock, turn around, sit down, lay back, and lift your feet



inside. It features a "snap tight" zipperless closure, where your weight automatically tensions the entrance, which automatically snaps closed behind you. User friendly? As good as it gets. This unique OB/Gyn-trance and exit system, which entails no fumbling with zippers, affords further advantage in a tactical situation, because you can exit downward, and hit the ground running (or firing, depending tactical requirements).

The Hennessy has 18 square feet of no-see-um or tropical netting, and the waterproof canopy may be tilted to any angle, rolled up above, or removed. Although a scant 2.5 pounds, and rolling up to

Continued on page 88

Frontal Assault

Here's another you'll-always-use-it piece of kit from the no-excuses guys down at Spec-Ops Brands. Remember how you'd hang around foreign troops even if you had to buy the beer, in hopes you could trade them out of some of their weird but handy ammo pouches, or trying to beat an unsympathetic supply NCO out of a couple extra first-aid pouches, so you'd have a "possibles" bag to hang on the front of your LBE so you could access little necessities on the move?

Today's G.I. has even more accessible extras to keep track of: compass, GPS, munchies, bug 'n' sunscreen, point-and-shoot camera, the tiny new civilian walkie-talkies, Ray-Bans — and if the mission demands it, even a handgun or a can of Riot Control In A Drum or other non-lethal spray. But the crux of carrying such key items is being able to access them on the move, without stopping to drop — and rummage through — your ruck. If you can't



access mission-essential gear when you need it, bringing it along just means more weight.

Thus was created Spec-Ops' new "Frontal Assault" Modular Cargo Pocket, which provides secure stowage and instant cargo access on the move. Adaptability being the key to universal utility, the Frontal Assault is thoughtfully designed to attach in a variety of ways to the front of your LBE: on the sternum strap, on the belt, or on the shoulder harness, and it's ALICE-clip compatible. Obviously, it may be hung anywhere, not just on the front, should your mission requirements dictate.

Measuring an irregular 5 x 6 x 1.5 inches, the Frontal Assault is made from rugged Cordura (available in day desert, woodland, OD or black) and features milspec webbing, a YKK zipper and slide, poly binding and nylon thread — even a National Molding D-ring upon which you can hang

Continued on page 88



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Poll: Most Americans, NRA Have Common Ground

A poll by Zogby International of some one thousand likely voters nationwide found 63% indicating that the NRA represents their personal views at least some of the time. Of those, 19% said the NRA represents their views all of the time. Thirty-four % said the NRA "never" represented their views, and 3% weren't sure.

Of Republicans surveyed, 86% said the NRA represented their views at least some of the time, compared to 68% of Independents and 39% of Democrats.

Willie Wails: "NRA Cost Gore Election"

In an interview with Dan Rather of CBS-TV, former President Bill Clinton said that his administration's push for gun control had cost former vice president Gore "at least" five states at the hand of the NRA.

"I don't think there is any doubt that, in at least five states I can think of, the NRA has a decisive influence because they disagreed with our attempts to close the gun-show loophole [sic] and have child trigger locks [sic], safety locks [sic] and ban large-scale ammunition clips [sic] ..."

Right on, Mr. Prez ...

Still Working The Angles

Remember the outraged flap when the Secret Service, who has statutory responsibility for the protection of presidents and former presidents, built a security fence at taxpayer expense for former President Nixon's place near Santa Barbara, California?

Try this on for size: According to a number of published reports, Hill and Billary bought a little digs @ \$1.7 million in New York to establish a carpet-bagging residence so she could run for the U.S. Senate. Now how, you ask, could a couple of dedicated public servants on a paltry government income manage to swing the down payment, especially when they had millions in outstanding legal bills resulting from their, uh, unusual lifestyle? And even if HUD granted them a minimum-down loan (obviously, the great Draft Dodger could not qualify for a VA loan), how in the world could they meet the payments? Easy. Find a sucker. Who? The American taxpayer, of course.

Now, according to the stories this is all perfectly legal, and the legal/financial machinations are very straightforward. Since the Secret Service is obliged to have staff on site to protect the former president, they have to have a place to stay, right? And if the protectee provides the facilities, he can charge for them. So facilities were built for the Secret Service detail, the rent on which allegedly matches ... the mortgage for the estate.

Rifle, Handgun, Blackpowder, Archery, Jackknife Season?

Paul Cheatham, 61, of Herrin, Illinois, was out for a stroll in the woods when he was charged by a six-point buck. As the animal attacked up close and personal, Cheatham grabbed it by the horns with one hand, fished out his jackknife with the other, opened same with his teeth, and proceeded to slice and dice about the buck's ribcage until it expired.

The 130-pound buck managed to inflict bruises over much of

Cheatham's body, but having a "hunting" story like this to tell your credulous grandkids is probably a fair trade, and the venison a bonus.

Dux Vs. *SOF* Affirmation

On 10 January, *SOF* was advised by counsel that the California Court of Appeals had affirmed the decision of the California Superior Court for Los Angeles County, which granted judgment for the defendants in the case of Dux Vs. *SOF*. This was a defamation case against *SOF* arising from our review of B. G. Burkett's book, *Stolen Valor*, in the November issue of *SOF*. The plaintiff has a right to petition the California Supreme Court to review the case. Like the U.S. Supreme Court, the California Supreme Court has discretionary authority in deciding whether or not to hear the case.

Gulf War Syndrome Linked to Brain Damage: Antidote Suspected

Medical researchers at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas say they may have found a connection between brain damage they have found in some veterans, and specific symptoms observed among the most sick. Gulf war vets who have brain damage to the right side of the brain suffer from memory lapses, depression and an impaired sense of direction: Those with damage to the left side of the brain have decreased ability in the areas of problem solving, decision making and reading. Further, it appeared that dizziness and imbalance are tied to damage to the brain-stem itself.

The lead researcher, Dr. Robert Haley, noted in an interview that, "in Gulf War Syndrome, it's not psychological. Their brains are malfunctioning. In medicine, we say it's an organic brain injury." Of study groups of severely effected Gulf War vets, those exhibiting a 10-to-25% loss of brain cells were eight times more likely to report they were in areas where gas-alarms sounded; They were also 32 times more likely to have had severe side effects after taking pyridostigmine bromide, the experimental nerve-reagent antidote. "It may have been the combination of low-level nerve-gas exposure and anti-gas tablets that caused the brain damage underlying this syndrome," said Haley.

South African Special Forces League Wants You

The South African Special Forces League desires to make contact with members of Special Forces Units and Associations all over the world with the view of building relationship with them.

Their members consist of Special Forces Operators from 1, 2, 4 and 5 Reconnaissance Regiments as well as members of the Rhodesian Selous Scouts.

Please contact Keith "Doc" Green via e-mail at spesbond@mweb.co.za.

Agent Orange Benefits for Korea Vets

Agent Orange defoliant has been used for years along the DMZ between North and South Korea — but it took Dave Benbow of Statesville, N.C., a Korean DMZ vet who happens to be a bulldog lawyer, to make the connection and rally G.I.s who had been exposed — and Rep. Lane Evans (D-Ill.) to get the Department of

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Veterans Affairs to begin screening exams for veterans stationed along the DMZ, who over the years were potentially exposed to the defoliant, which can lead to myriad problems from skin cancer to Hodgkin's lymphoma. Affected veterans are advised to contact their local VA facility to arrange for an exam. Agent Orange and its health effects first came to light due to its extensive use as a jungle defoliant in Vietnam.

Big Hack Attack

According to the Pentagon's Computer Emergency Response Team, in 1994, there were 225 recorded cyber attacks on U.S. military computer systems; in 1995 there were 559; in 1996 there were 730; in 1997 there were 780; in 1998 there were 5,844; in 1999 there were 22,144. And through October, 2000, there had been 20,418.

Sellout & Waffle

Hard on the heels of their market-benumbing gaffe in kowtowing to anti-gun extremists in the federal government a year ago — we refer to their agreement known within the industry as the "S&W Sellout" — the one-time leader in the American firearms industry has done it again. After the industry, Second Amendment community and consumers spurned this move ("a futile act of craven self-interest" NRA-ILA Executive Director Jim Baker called it), with virtual unanimity, S&W found itself teetering toward financial disaster. One of the chief architects of the sellout, S&W CEO Ed Schultz, was removed from his position and there was hopeful speculation within the community that the now-British-owned S&W might change its corporate policy.

Apparently and alas, this would not seem to be the case. The company has recently cut another deal, this time with the anti-gun politicians of the City of Boston, that is even worse. In addition to even more wild and complicated standards for a second serial number, the devil's deal with Boston sets more stringent standards for S&W's committing revenue to "smart" gun research. But the frosting on the cake is that S&W set up a "compliance liaison" to consult with the city on how S&W guns are designed and manufactured, so the freedom-eaters can gorge directly from the trough.

VA Adds Diabetes Benefit for Viet Vets

Vietnam veterans (9 Jan 62 through 7 May 75) with adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes are now eligible for disability benefits due to their possible exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides used during the war to defoliate guerrilla hiding areas or destroy enemy crops.

A recent National Institute of Medicine study suggests a link between exposure to

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such herbicides and an increased risk of adult-onset diabetes, thus the condition was added to the list of diseases presumed to have been caused by a G.I.'s exposure during Vietnam service, thus affected veterans are eligible for disability compensation. As early symptoms of diabetes, for which there are effective treatments but no cure, can be subtle but devastating in the long-term if not treated, veterans are advised to have routine tests for the disease, or request a physical exam through the VA.

SOF staff



SOF: wherever men fight for liberty. On a recent trek to the Sudanese war zone — his fifth — **SOF** Senior Foreign Correspondent Rob Krott took a short time-out to deliver some mags, T-shirts and our best wishes to troops at Yei, New Sudan.

Benavidez Foundation On-Line

The Roy P. Benavidez Foundation, Inc. is now on-line: www.rpbfoundation.org. The non-profit foundation is named in honor of the late Roy Benavidez (MOH) who was a long-time friend of **SOF**.

Renewed U.S./Philippine Military Ties

Although the Philippines and the United States have maintained a mutual defense treaty since 1951, military relations became nearly nonexistent after a 1991 agreement to disagree on terms of continuing a U.S. military presence at Clark AFB, in Angeles City, and at the large U.S. naval complex at Subic Bay. In 1992 all U.S. troops and hardware left, and Clarke was subsequently laid waste by a volcano. Up to that time, the Philippines had received nearly \$100 million a year in U.S. military grants, and the local economy benefited from U.S. military personnel's spending habits.

The 1999 signing of a Visiting Forces agreement provided a new legal framework for U.S. uniformed personnel to train and exercise in the Philippines, and an ongoing top-to-bottom defense review of the

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Philippine military establishment, by a joint Philippine/Pentagon team, has identified many areas for future cooperation, particularly in the training and education of Philippine soldiers. Current agendas include the transfer of used equipment, ranging from one C-130, eight Hueys and 100 used deuce-and-a-halves. Last year the Pentagon provided \$1.4 million for military education and training of Philippine soldiers, and some \$5 million is set aside for the same purpose this year. Joint exercises have resume as of last year.

Comrade Capitalist

Tourists of the world, throw off your chains! Visit the world's tackiest new theme park, Stalin's World brain(?)child of Lithuanian businessman Vilumias Malinauskak. A recreation of a former Soviet Union gulag prison camp, the park will feature actors in guard towers and prison cells. The owner plans to use his own statues of Stalin, Lenin and Marx.

Black Beret Website

For further information and many points of contact within the groundswell of opposition to the new "issued, not earned" black beret for all Army troops (see story by Mike Peck, page 56 this issue), punch up the website: www.rangerblackberet.com. A virtual political movement and cottage industry have sprung up, nourished by this controversy.

Aussie Feds Confiscate \$2 Plastic Toy Gun

According to a story in the Australian *Sunday Mail*, customs authorities seized a \$2 plastic pistol as a dangerous, prohibited import. It had been sent to a 12-year-old boy by his grandmother in New Zealand. With a spring, the toy fires a soft yellow plastic pellet a distance of no more than 30cm (about a foot). The boy's father, a retired police officer, was told the toy had been classified as a .45 soft air handgun, prohibited without a police import permit. To get his toy gun, the youngster would have to apply to the Queensland Police Service for an import permit — which he could not get because he is too young. If he could get the permit, then he would have to put the toy through further safety tests so he could be issued a serial number.

The next time some blind man tries to tell you why a particular piece of slippery-slope gun-grabbing legislation is a good idea and the one-worlders don't want to take your personal defense arms — think of this. The Aussie registered their guns. Their guns were largely confiscated. Now this is the idiotic result. Cops — who would be better used fighting crime of some sort — snarling about needing a serial number on a \$2 plastic bang-bang. Is there anything to call this but stupid? ☒

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Photos courtesy author

The Shpagin: Russia's Ubiquitous Burp Gun



There is a memorial to Georgi Semyenovitch Shpagin near the *Vyatskie Polyany* Machine Building Plant (known as *Molot J.S.C.* — the word “molot” stands for “hammer,” as in the old Soviet hammer-and-sickle logo) located in the Kirov region near Russia’s border with Tatarstan. Justifiably so, since during World War II this factory alone manufactured 2.6 million PPSH41 (*Pistolet Pulemet Shpagin 1941* — Shpagin machine pistol of 1941) submachine guns. Several other facilities produced the PPSH41, including Tula and Sestroretsk, and it has been estimated that a total of more than 10 million were eventually fabricated during and shortly after World War II. No other submachine gun has ever been produced in quantities even close to this.

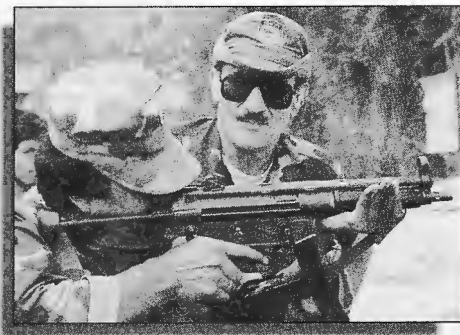
The PPSH41 was preceded by the PPD (*Pistolet Pulemet Degtyareva*) series of submachine guns developed by V.A. Degtyarev in the early 1930s. During that time frame, components for military small arms were invariably made from rough forgings that required extensive machining. This was time-consuming and wasteful of raw materials. In a manner quite innovative at the time, Shpagin developed a weapon with an upper receiver and barrel jacket assembly made from a heavy-gauge, sheet metal stamping, formed on a fixture and then welded together. All of the many PPSH41 SMGs that I have owned and examined over the years exhibited numerous grinding wheel marks, the method by which excess welding was crudely removed. Pins and rivets were used to attach components such as the sights to the upper receiver.

On 26 August 1940, the Shpagin prototype successfully completed a 30,000-round firing test with flawless results.

Contemporaneously with the development of the Shpagin prototypes, a designer named Boris Shpitalniy proposed a competing design based upon the unlocked blowback principle as well, but equipped with a gas-boost system to provide the bolt with an additional recoil impulse. After further testing of the two designs, the Shpagin was adopted for service with the Red Army on 21 December 1940, just six months before the commencement of the “Great Patriotic War.” As a direct result, Shpagin eventually became a Hero of Socialist Labor and later a Lieutenant General in the Red Army.

The PPSH41 fires from the open-bolt position by means of pure unlocked blowback. Like all Russian submachine guns, it is chambered for the 7.62x25mm bottlenecked cartridge originally developed for the TT1930/33 (*Tula Tokareva 1930/1933*) pistol. The muzzle velocity of this round out of the Shpagin’s 10.6-inch barrel is nominally about 1,600 fps, although I have fired Czech ammunition in this caliber that generated 1,950 fps. As a consequence, the 7.62x25mm cartridge has a flatter trajectory than most military pistol rounds and can reach out to several hundred meters. However, its 87-grain FMJ, round-nose projectile will invariably over-penetrate

The Black Sea Marines, known as “Black Death” by the Germans, fight on the Eastern Front. Note the awkward grip of the operator’s support arm required because of the 71-round drum’s configuration.



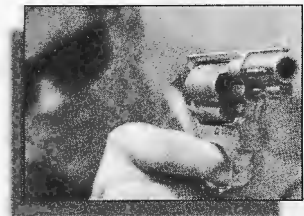
WEAPON TESTS AND EVALUATIONS

The Best of *Soldier Of Fortune*
by Peter G. Kokalis

There are those who write about weapons from behind a desk, relying on field reports, statistics, and press releases to shape their opinions. Then there is Peter G. Kokalis, who for 20 years has traveled the globe—risking enemy fire from the jungles of El Salvador to the deserts of Africa—to bring more exclusives to readers of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine than any other writer on small arms.

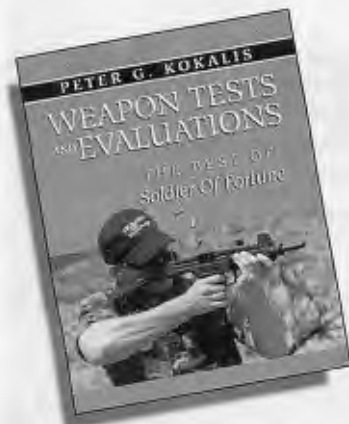
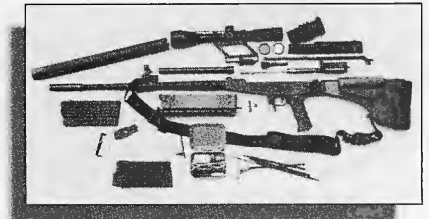
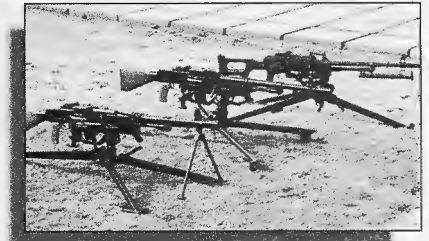
Kokalis debuted as a writer for *SOF* in 1981 and quickly earned a permanent spot in the staff box as Technical Editor. He brought back stories from battlefields around the world; traveled behind the Great Wall to test weapons at the invitation of the Red Chinese government; and even raised a glass with Mikhail Kalashnikov himself in post-communist Russia.

In this comprehensive anthology of Kokalis' best articles from *SOF* and *Fighting Firearms* magazines, you'll get authoritative reviews and detailed information on dozens of handguns, rifles, SMGs, sniper rifles, and shotguns. You'll also travel with him as he trains El Salvador's Atlacatl Battalion, visits the cagey gun dealers of Afghanistan to test the elusive Soviet AGS-17, and goes where no Western writer has gone before for his groundbreaking eight-part series examining the weapons of the Chinese army.







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Chinese Type 50 submachine gun, a close but not exact copy of the Soviet PPSH41. Shown with Russian 71-round drums and 35-round magazines together with magazine loader and front sight and maintenance tools.



in human targets, passing through as much as 55 inches of tissue simulatant. But don't sell it short, as it has counted final coup on tens of thousands of the revolution's enemies. At about 900 rpm, the PPSH41's cyclic rate is at the high end, although still fully controllable — largely as a result of its 12-pound loaded weight (with the 71-round drum). Overall length of this weapon is 33.1 inches. The

four-groove barrel has a right hand twist of one turn in 9.5 inches (241 mm), which is standard for all Russian .30-caliber barrels. The bore and chamber are hard-chrome-plated.

A two-piece hinge pin at the front of the lower receiver, that can be easily removed, holds the upper and lower receivers together. Two types of rear sights will be encountered. Early specimens were



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equipped with a tangent type sight with an open U-notch that is adjustable in elevation from 50 to 500 meters. A flip-type rear sight soon replaced this somewhat complex and overly optimistic sight assembly, with open square-notches set for elevations of 100 and 200 meters. The round post-type front sight can be adjusted for elevation-zero with the appropriate tool. The front sight has a skeletonized protective hood that was spot welded in place. The barrel is press fit into the upper receiver's barrel jacket. It can be removed if caution and the proper tools are employed. The barrel jacket, ventilated with oval, longitudinal slots on all sides, extends more than an inch beyond the barrel's muzzle and is cut at an angle to serve as a muzzle brake. Although this does reduce muzzle climb during burst fire, its trade-off is a significant increase in muzzle blast.

The bolt, recoil spring, guide rod and buffer ride in the housing formed by the upper and lower receiver bodies. The PPSH41's machined bolt will be encountered either salt-blued or left in-the-white. The extractor is pinned in place in a slot on top of the bolt. A fixed ejector mounted in the lower receiver propels empty cases out of a relatively small ejection port in the top of the upper receiver. The fixed firing pin is press fit into the breech face. Both the recoil spring and its guide rod rest partially in a hole in the rear half of the bolt. A sliding latch on the bolt handle, which is pressed into a corresponding hole in the bolt body, permits the bolt to be locked either forward or in the cocked position. There is no other safety mechanism.

The PPSH41 buffer, an important element in moderating the recoil impulse and preventing damage to both the reciprocating parts and the rear end of both the upper and lower receiver assemblies was a long standing problem area. The original buffers were fabricated from 18mm-thick fiber, but this was difficult to machine and production was never able to keep up with the demand. Buffers made of glued sheets of fiber and also rubber failed to perform satisfactorily. Finally, in February 1942, it was found that buffers made from parchment leather could withstand 15,000 rounds before



Russian fiber buffer on the left is longer than the Chinese Type 50 rubber buffer and cannot be used in the Type 50 without modification.

requiring replacement and were adopted. The 7.62x25mm cartridge generates a substantial recoil impulse and I had one PPSH41 buttstock shatter in the upper-wrist area while I was firing the weapon about 30 years ago.

The PPSH41 buttstock is made of wood. It holds the trigger housing, and the buttstock's front-end mates with the rear end of the drum/magazine-well assembly. A single screw passing through a rear tab on the lower receiver, the stock and threaded to the rear end

Continued on page 90

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WORLD SITREP

1

UNITED STATES

Lt. Commander Michael S. Speicher Might Be Alive In Iraq: According to newly released information, POW Speicher's status has been revised from KIA to MIA. General Shalikashvili reportedly spiked covert intel-gathering op to search for Speicher's remains at his F-18 crash site. • **Good For Business?** Bush's nominee for Labor Sec., Elaine Chao, has ties to China President Jiang Zemin. Chao's father, a longtime friend of Jiang, owns Foremost Maritime Corporation, which ships goods from CONUS to China and elsewhere in Asia. • **Chump Change:** Clinton's Indonesian billionaire buddy, James Riady, pleads guilty to 1992 payment of foreign funds to reimburse Clinton campaign coffers. His fine? \$8.6 million. Lippo Bank California (an affiliate of Lippo Group) agrees to plead guilty to 86 misdemeanors relating to Riady and another of its agents, John Huang, making illegal foreign campaign contributions from 1988 – 1994. • **Still On The Hook:** It appears that taxpayers will not only foot the bill for the Clintons' Secret Service entourage, but will pay their rent at their New York digs. • **Berets At A Bargain:** At least some of the new black headgear being issued to all Army personnel might be manufactured in Mainland China. • **Cut-Rate Defenders:** 12,000 U. S. military personnel are collecting food stamps. A minimum 3.2% pay raise is in the offing. • **DNA:** Tests involving approximately 15 items of suppressed evidence being conducted in Washington, D.C. in relation to landmark Dr. Jeffrey R. MacDonald murder case.

4

NORTH KOREA

Down The Tubes: 10 senior officials removed due to inter-Korean trade irregularities. Action threatens to partially destabilize relations between North and South Korea.

5

PANAMA

China's Boys: China likely to assist in needed \$6 billion expansion of Panama Canal. Since U. S. has shown little interest, Chinese are there to fill the void. China's area of influence is spreading throughout Latin America.

9

CHAD

Tenuous Pipeline: Funded nearly \$3.7 billion by ExxonMobil, Malaysia's Petronas and Chevron, 663-mile pipeline will stretch from oil-rich, and volatile, Department of Logone Oriental across Cameroon. Current President, Idriss Deby, has allowed some democratization but still holds reins of power.

10

NEPAL

Dissent Maoist insurgency causes increased dissension within ranks of ruling party, which controls approximately one-fourth of territory.

14

CHECHNYA

New Terrs: Chechen rebels resorting to terrorist tactics since Russian conventional military successes have limited their capabilities. Attempted assassinations and hit-and-run attacks against military convoys and troop installations are order of the day.

15

PERU

Treading Water: Fujimori's resignation results in economic stagnation with investors holding-off until political climate becomes more certain.

16

ITALY

On Alert! U. S. bases placed on full alert after intel reports indicated that bin Laden terrorists might have them in their crosshairs.

2

RUSSIA

About Face? Vladimir Putin, the ex-KGB operative, appears to have declared independence from IMF puppeteers who formerly viewed Russia as a welfare state. His nation's new confidence has IMFers coming hat-in-hand to offer loan guarantees, fearing that "the Bear" might seek to expand beyond its present borders if financial investment isn't forthcoming by peaceful means. • **Yugo, We Go:** Has set about strengthening ties with Yugoslavia which involves in future arms sales and increased Russian peacekeeping role in Kosovo. • **The More Things Change ...** Seeks to regain economic dominance in Cuba having given way to Canadian and European investment over past decade. • **Bio-Bad?** Some of U.S. aid money for civilian biological research may have been diverted to germ warfare research. • **Closer Neighbor?** Moscow official says for \$40 billion, tunnel can be constructed between Russia and the U. S. under the Bering Strait. • **Coming To Your Town:** Despite Putin's advances, Russian Mafia allegedly controls at least one-third of economy, including an organ-harvesting racket.

3

CHINA

Big Wind: Starting to tap into huge potential of wind energy systems by use of wind-driven electrical turbines which make this type of energy cost-competitive.

6

SAUDI ARABIA

Bad Press: Clinton Administration criticized across the board for its role in Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Clinton, himself, is termed "an Israeli hostage."

7

IRAQ

Bring Me Your Bucks: Sanctions remain in place but V.P.-elect Cheney, when a consultant for Halliburton, reportedly lobbied for relaxation. As Bush enters, sanctions against not only Iraq, but against Libya and Iran might be lifted. "Business-friendly" will describe the Republican administration. • **Woe Unto Israel:** Saddam's saber-rattling welcome to Bush Administration focuses on advocating Holy War against Israel. Nuclear arsenal is the big threat, especially since Saddam has allegedly ordered renewed nuclear research. • **But Wait ...** Egyptian intel says Saddam might be invalid due to stroke — or might be dead. Reports say he was last seen during military parade on New Year's Day.

8

ZIMBABWE

Thug Factor: Zanu-PF party loyalists resort to physical intimidation, including beatings, to drum up votes to regain Bikita West seat, lost to MDC during parliamentary elections last June. Results may decide whether Robert Mugabe runs for re-election next year.

11

KOSOVO

Dirty Sites: UN finds radioactivity at eight of 11 sites struck in 1999 by NATO ammo with depleted uranium. "Balkans Syndrome" appears to affect numerous peacekeepers.

12

COLOMBIA & VENEZUELA

Opening Rift: Diplomatic relations may nosedive due to Colombian perception that Venezuela is offering covert aid to leftist Gs inside Colombian territory. Latter's direct contact with ELN and FARC has long-been cause for concern.

13

17

CANADA

Send Us Your ... Criminals: *International Crime Threat Assessment* asserts that Chinese gangs are utilizing Canada as staging area for forays into U.S. *ICTA* is produced by CIA, NSC, FBI and some 10 additional U.S. agencies.

18

AFGHANISTAN

Give Up Your Terrorist: Joint U.S.-Russian resolution calls for Taliban militia turn-over of Osama bin Laden, or stomach a global arms embargo.

World Sitrep is compiled by the SOF staff with information from various media and correspondents.

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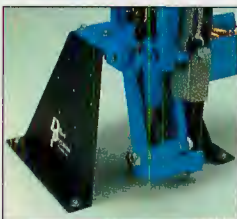
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Battle Blades

by Bill Bagwell

What Is a Fighting Knife?

There is a big difference between a fighting knife and a knife that you can fight with. In the automotive world, there are pickup trucks and dump trucks, SUVs and family sedans, and then there are Rolls Royces and Ferraris. And nobody confuses one with the other. All are motor vehicles, and all are used to transport people and things from one place to another, and each has its own special place in the scheme of things. So it is with knives. We have pen knives and pruning knives, paring knives and butter knives, knives for cleaning fish, and knives for skinning animals. Each is designed for and focused upon a particular chore, and while you could go to the opera in a dump truck, or fight for your life with a butter knife, common sense dictates the use of the Rolls Royce for the opera, and something other than the butter knife when the chips are down and your life is at stake.

Knife fighting is as chilling, dangerous, dirty, and repulsive as it gets. It is an activity that no sane or rational person wants to engage in, yet at the same time, sane and rational men — because they are sane and rational — train in the art of the blade. They also design and make knives that will give them a lifesaving advantage over other knives that they may face in the arena of mortal combat. These, then, are fighting knives. They are knives that are designed and intended to engage and defeat other knives, nothing more or less. This is not about fashion, trends, or hype. It is about the design and selection of a specific tool that works in a particular environment.

A good fighting knife should possess four elements. These four elements work in concert to provide a package of

The Bowie was developed in a violent fighting environment and quickly replaced the dagger, *poignard* and saber, and for good reason. In a blade culture peopled by discerning men, it quickly became apparent that the Bowie was more effective and worked better than anything else.

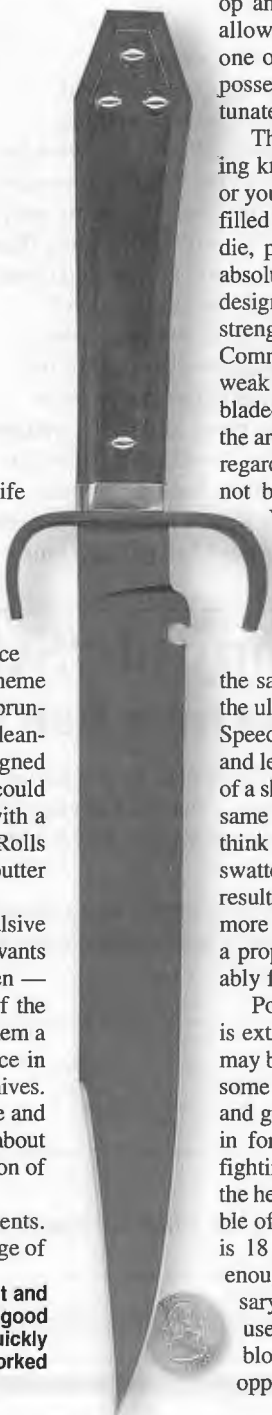
speed, power, cutting capability, and the capacity to develop and utilize superior tactics in an engagement that will allow success and ultimately victory. Many knives possess one or two, or even three, of these elements, but very few possess all four. Those that do are cherished by the men fortunate enough to own them.

The first of these elements is superior strength. Your fighting knife must be strong enough to withstand any blow you or your adversary may be able to inflict on it in an adrenaline-filled fight to the death. It must not break. If it does, you will die, plain and simple. Good steel, properly tempered is an absolute must. Beyond steel, there is the consideration of design, which also has a direct bearing on the amount of strength present in a particular knife. The Fairbairn-Sykes Commando knife of WWII was prone to breakage due to a weak point and a skimpy tang, and is an example of a fixed-bladed knife that suffered from a serious design deficiency in the area of strength. Folders are particularly vulnerable in this regard, and this is but one of several reasons that a folder cannot be considered as a front-line, primary fighting knife.

While folders have their place in the scheme of things, and I carry one, I do not consider it to be a fighting knife, per se. Rather, it is a knife that I could fight with, but I shudder to think that it would be the best equipment I could muster in a knife fight.

Speed, power, and cutting capability are not one and the same, but they are all part of the equation that results in the ultimate fighting knife, and they are all inexorably linked. Speed is quickness of blade, and is a function of both balance and length. The tip of a longer blade moves faster than the tip of a short blade, provided that they are each provided with the same velocity when they are both put into motion. Don't think so? Try to kill a fly with your bare hands, then try a fly-swatter. The leverage provided by the length of the flyswatter results in more speed at the business end of the swatter and more dead flies than the bare-hand method. The blade tip of a properly balanced 11-inch Bowie simply moves considerably faster than the tip of a 4-inch folder.

Power is the ability of a knife to make really big cuts. This is extremely important in a fighting knife, as your adversary may be wearing thick clothing such as a leather jacket or even some type of body armor. If your knife can't penetrate this and get to the flesh and bone underneath, you are going to be in for a very rough afternoon. Clothing aside, a front-line fighting knife should take an opponent out with a solid hit to the head or extremities. A good fighting knife should be capable of cleaving lengthwise a piece of 2x6 or 2x10 lumber that is 18 inches in length. A knife that will make this cut has enough power to split a skull or sever the hand of an adversary. A knife with this kind of power automatically gives its user a tremendous tactical advantage, as any attempt at blocking the blade by taking a cut to the hand or arm by an opponent will result in his immediate incapacitation and/or



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death. Any defensive tactics by your opponent that may involve traps or blocks become useless, if not suicidal, against such a knife. Indeed, the only viable defense your opponent has in this case is avoidance. Power comes principally from leverage which is provided by length, but speed and weight of the blade, as well as the configuration and keenness of the cutting edge, are also contributing factors that combine to give a knife whatever cutting power it might have.

A front-line fighting knife should provide its user with a tactical advantage over other knives it may engage. A longer blade, say 10 to 12 inches, provides three things, all of which are advantageous in a fighting knife: The first is superior reach. If the other guy can't reach you with his blade, he can't cut you, yet, if at the same time you can reach him, you can cut him. It's that simple. The second advantage of the longer blade is that it is faster at the tip than its shorter counterpart, if it is properly made and balanced. This gives its user the tactical advantage of speed and makes the opponent easier to hit than he would be with a shorter, slower knife. The third tactical advantage of the longer blade is the additional power it provides, and power in a knife completely neutralizes blocking or trapping tactics of an opponent, thus limiting his defensive options.

A correctly designed fighting knife must have an effective guard. This is not for show. This is for protection of your hand and fingers from both your blade and his. Some true fighting guards, such as those found on the "Crossada" and the "Hell's Belle," work in concert with the Spanish notch to provide the opportunity to trap the opponents blade between the quillions and ricasso. In many cases, a knowledgeable blade practitioner can not only neutralize the blade of his opponent, he can actually rip the knife from the hand of his adversary using such a guard. This is done, and it is trained for and practiced by advanced students of the blade of my acquaintance.

A proper fighting knife is a blend of strength, reach, speed, and power. It should enhance your offensive and defensive options and limit or neutralize those of your opponent. The knife that does these things and more better than any knife ever designed is a good Bowie. It was developed in and by an active blade culture by men who were intelligent, and above all, pragmatic. The Natchez Trace at night leaves no room for error in either judgment or equipment; not today, and certainly not in 1840. The Bowie was developed in a violent, fighting environment and quickly replaced the dagger, poignard and saber, and for good reason. In a blade culture peopled by discerning men, it quickly became apparent that the Bowie was more effective and worked better than anything else.

I do not want to have to fight for my life with a knife. But should I be forced to do so, and a knife is the weapon of choice or circumstance, the knife in my hand will be a Bowie. ☞

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The date: January 1968. The place: Chau Doc, Vietnam. The situation: Tet Offensive. The problem: how to rescue an American nurse from under the very noses of the Viet Cong, who completely control Chau Doc. The Principals: SEAL petty officers Harry Humphries and Frank Thornton.

Here's how Major Drew Dix, U.S. Army Special Forces Medal of Honor winner for his actions alongside Humphries and Thornton during this period, describes the beginnings of the rescue in his just-released (and self-published) book, *The Rescue of River City* [www.drewdix.com]:

"...Harry and Frank climbed up onto my jeep...Upon seeing the two jeeps wheeling around, the TOC [Tactical Operations Center] gate [operator] automatically

swung [the gate] open... .

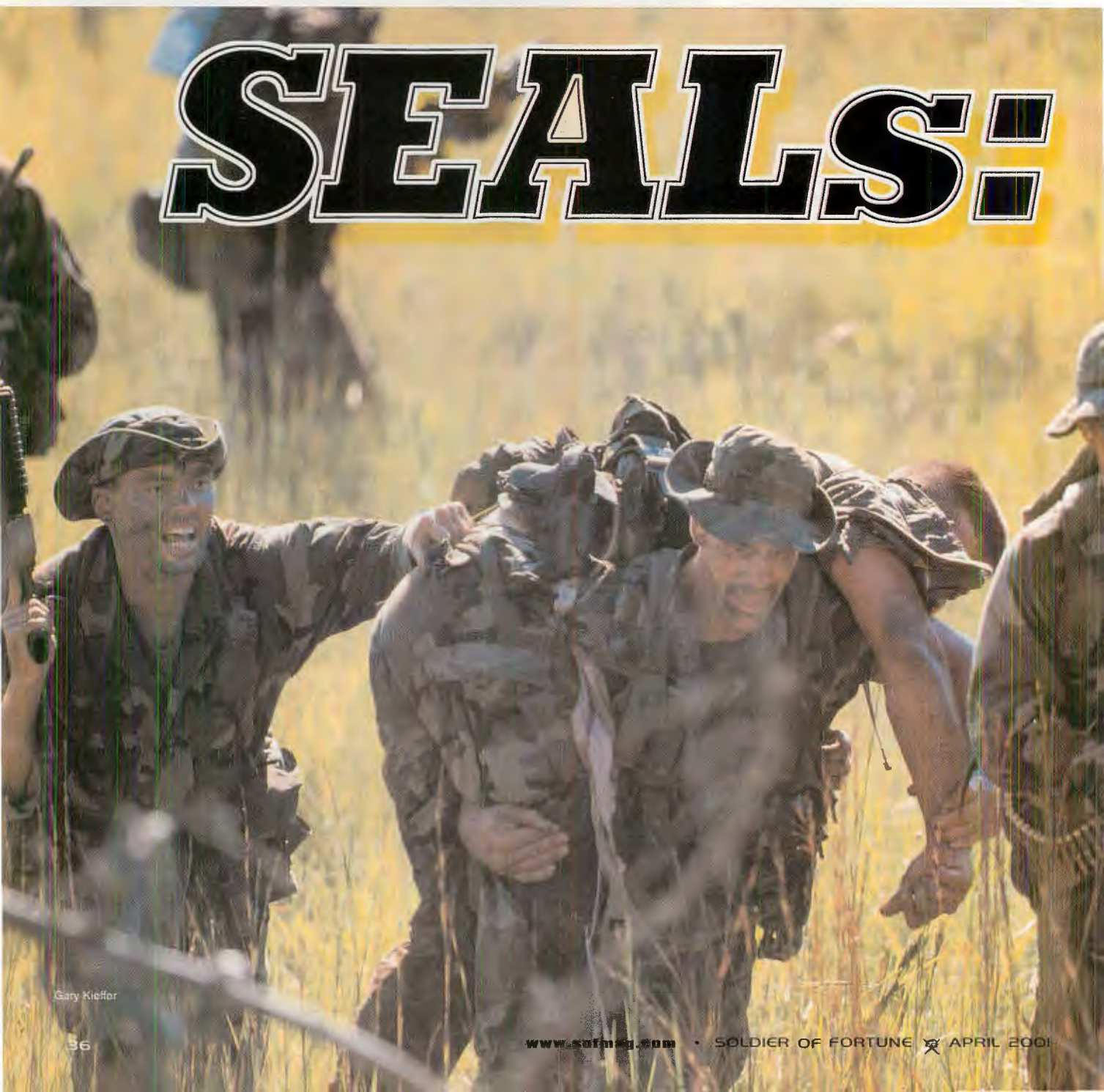
"Upon making the first turn toward Maggie's house, we immediately began receiving a high volume of enemy fire coming from several of the taller buildings on both sides of the street. Frank and Harry appeared to be trading positions as the heavy [.50 caliber] gun whirled back and forth. As I saw it, Harry and Frank were taking turns firing as the gun came into their hands. In any case, they were doing a great job handling the situation."

When the group arrived at her house, they discovered Maggie terrified but unhurt. After a few minutes of playing hide-and-seek with the Viet Cong occupying her house and compound, Dix, Humphries, Thornton, and the others succeeded in getting Maggie out of the house and into one of

the jeeps and batted her down with flak jackets. Somehow, the jeeps with their precious cargo managed to run the gauntlet back to the TOC, where "[a]gain, the two gates swung open as if they were automatic" writes Dix. Miraculously, the only injury was to Maggie, who sustained a scraped knee while exiting her compound.

This event was so breathtakingly courageous that it was only through the neglect of the on-scene SEAL platoon commander that Thornton and Humphries received a mere mention of the event in the Bronze Star citations for their actions during the Tet '68 offensive. As Dix observed to me, "I told [the SEAL platoon commander] that Harry and Frank did everything I did, and if I got an award they should get the same thing." The officer obviously did not heed

SEALS!



Dix' observation.

The heroic actions of Humphries and Thornton during Tet '68 have become legendary in the SEAL community, and their reputations as military operators *par excellence* are secure. One might ask 30-plus years later whether their accomplishments during that time of ultimate stress represent the peaks of their professional careers. The answer is a resounding "No!"

Let's see why that is the correct answer.

One of the self-ascribed attributes of the Navy SEALs is that of succeeding at whatever they attempt. One might think that their reputations as super-achievers were restricted to their roles as military men. It appears that is not the case. In fact, a cursory glance down the roster of the principal SEAL fraternal organization would seem to

indicate that SEALs' civilian achievements often parallel (or even exceed) their military accomplishments.

Harry Humphries And Frank Thornton

Meet Harry Humphries, CEO of GSGI, Inc. (www.gsgi.org), one of the top security-consulting firms in the nation.

And meet Frank Thornton, President of Trident Investigative Services, a small private investigation firm in San Diego, CA.

Humphries and Thornton in their civilian incarnations exemplify the time-honored never-quit attitude of Hell Week alumni, even though their paths diverged after Vietnam. Humphries, who left the Navy shortly after completing his tour in-country, entered the world of business, becoming involved in a variety of enterprises includ-



Steven L. Waterman

Harry Humphries, CEO of GSGI, Inc. (www.gsgi.org), one of the top security-consulting firms in the nation.

Continued Professionalism

Look Where They Are Now

BY CAPT. LARRY BAILEY, USN (RET.)



ing chemical plant operations manager. While he never experienced bone-wearying failure in any of his ventures, he was never satisfied with where he was and what he was doing.

That all changed when he perceived the need for a company that could provide the security, and the training it requires, to individuals and companies around the world. His 200-plus combat missions as a Vietnam-era SEAL and his exposure to security and defense techniques render him uniquely qualified for the work he undertakes at the present.

As owner-operator of GSGI, he has provided security services as far afield as Russia, the nations of the CIS, Albania, Kosovo, the Middle East, Latin America, and, of course, the United States, where he frequently works for major Hollywood producers.

Frank Thornton, on the other hand, completed a career in the Navy, becoming the single-most-decorated SEAL in Vietnam. Winner of the Silver Star and countless other awards, he was able to market his considerable SEAL skills in the world of private investigation. In addition to conducting run-of-the-mill investigations of potential



courtesy author

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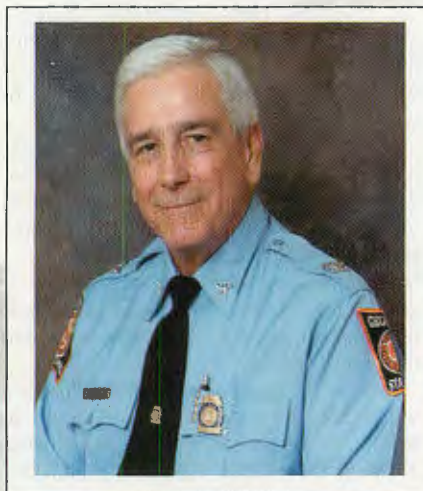


employees and wayward husbands, Thornton does a considerable trade in providing security for shipping companies that are victimized by modern-day high-tech pirates in Asian waters. In fact, his "field operations" are not dissimilar from those he conducted in South Vietnam, and his solutions can be just as lethal. 'Nuff said.

Thornton has run "security operations" in Thailand, the Philippines, and Bosnia, among other countries. And while he is "not at liberty" to go into detail about some of the things he does, it is clear that the smell of gunpowder is no stranger to him. Suffice it to say that he, too, has achieved success outside the Teams. His Trident International investigative company in San Diego, CA, has an impressive list of clients who require the unique services Thornton provides.

Bob Hightower

Now meet Bob Hightower, an early-50s'-vintage frogman who spent his three years in the Teams as an enlisted man and then entered the world of law enforcement. After joining the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police shortly after leaving the Navy, he became one of the early members of what became the D.C. SWAT team. Leaving D.C. in 1963, he



Bob Hightower: Colonel Hightower is known and respected throughout the United States for his hard-nosed and effective approach to fighting crime.

joined the Georgia Bureau of Investigation. His nine years with that agency saw him not only working many major cases but also creating the first Organized Crime Intelligence Unit in the state of Georgia.

Hightower was appointed Director of

the Cobb County (adjacent to Atlanta) Police Department in 1972. His performance was sufficiently impressive as to result in his being appointed the county's Director of Public Safety, where he served until 1999. At that time he was appointed Commissioner of Public Safety and Colonel Commanding of the Georgia State Patrol by Governor Roy Barnes. Not bad for an old frogman starting from scratch! Colonel Hightower is known and respected throughout the United States for his hard-nosed and effective approach to fighting crime.

Gordon Beaham

Gordon Beaham is one of the most unassuming frogmen of my acquaintance. If you were to sit next to him in an airplane, you would observe only a quiet and unassuming fellow (albeit tall — 6 foot 4 inches) who probably would spend most of his time looking out the window.

A graduate of East Coast training in 1954, Beaham was Submersible Operations Officer at UDT-22, in which capacity he planned, directed, and established the Navy record for cold-water endurance — 1 mile underwater in 34-degree water. After an instructor tour in the UDT training unit, he



courtesy author

left the Navy in 1956 to obtain his MBA from Harvard. Subsequently, he joined Faultless Starch/Bon Ami (a family company) where he went up the ladder to President and CEO from Director of R&D through Marketing Director, Vice President, and Executive Vice President.

While Beaham's corporate achievements have been enough to incite the envy of any MBA-holder, perhaps his most notable accomplishments have been in the area of philanthropy and community service. Included in that service are stints as Chairman, National Parks and Conservation Association; President, Board of Directors, Boys & Girls Clubs of Kansas City; Director of Students in Free Enterprise; and member of the Dean's Committee for International Development, JFK School of

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Government at Harvard.

Gordon Beaham, known as "Gordo" in the Teams, has not only realized success but has shared that success with others. May there be others like him.

Troy Vaught

I first met Troy Vaught when he was a seaman in Underwater Demolition Team 22's Second Platoon in 1964. A soft-spoken Texan who would deliver a devastating left hook at the drop of a hat, Vaught was never satisfied with anything less than everything he could deliver to a challenge, whether physical or mental, a characteristic that served him well as a UDT operator.

Leaving the Navy in 1966, he returned to Texas and obtained his college degree, working all the while with LTV Aerospace Corporation in Arlington. At the same time he continued the flying lessons he began while in the Navy. After receiving every rating he needed, he resigned from LTV and opened his own flying school. Eventually, however, he became a legendary cropduster in South Texas, accumulating over 20,000 hours of stick time. He also kept his adrenaline pumping by doing some nighttime border-hopping into Mexico for various govern-

SEALS: Continued Professionalism



Gary Kleffer

ment and extra-governmental clients (nothing illegal in the United States, mind you!)

In 1998 Vaught realized his lifelong dream—he was hired as Chief Test Pilot for Air Tractor, Inc., of Olney, Texas, the world's largest manufacturer of cropdusters and firebombers. As he put it to me, "I'm getting paid big bucks to do something that I'd pay to do!" How many times have other SEALs made the same remark?

Dante Stephensen

Some *SOF* readers will have dined in the eating/drinking/jazz establishment of the noted SEAL raconteur, Dante Stephensen. If you've ever spent any time in Atlanta, you'll at least have heard of his restaurants. Keep reading ...

His Navy career as a junior UDT/SEAL officer merely presaged the remarkable career he created for himself since leaving the service. Graduating from UDT training in 1959, Stephensen was one of a handful of officers selected to found SEAL Team Two in response to a presidential directive in 1961. By the time ST-2 was commissioned in 1962, his actions as the team's training officer had resulted in the qualification of a cadre of perhaps the finest fighting men ever produced in any country.

Stephensen's post-Navy career has taken a number of turns, including manufacturing

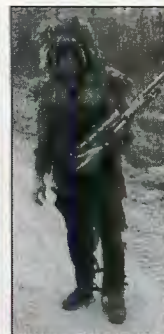
a line of inexpensive shoes. I remember seeing his camouflage-painted Volkswagen beetle in North Carolina as he crisscrossed the country promoting his footwear. Entering his "final" career as restaurateur, Stephensen founded "Dante's Down the Hatch" restaurant in Underground Atlanta in 1969. Hailed as one of the 12 most beautiful restaurants in the world by a major trade organization, it has been the recipient of numerous awards by metropolitan organizations and publications.

Anticipating the vagaries of the economic scene in 1981, Stephensen opened a second "Dante's Down the Hatch" restaurant in Buckhead, a northern suburb of Atlanta. His prescience resulted in one of the most popular restaurants in the area, one which frequently sees old SEAL buddies (and a smattering of the younger generation) stop in for a meal and an evening of camaraderie and fine jazz.

Erik Prince

And speaking of the younger generation, let's take a look at Erik Prince, entrepreneur extraordinaire. Prince, who graduated from Basic UDT/SEAL training (BUD/S) in 1993, operated with SEAL Team Eight in Little Creek, VA, before leaving the Navy to look after family businesses, a task that was necessitated by the untimely death of his father.

When family matters were attended to,



courtesy author

Eric Prince: Now and then. Prince perceived a need for a one-stop-has-it-all training facility that would cater to U.S. and foreign special operations units, SWAT teams, and various U.S. Government agencies.

Prince perceived a need for a one-stop-has-it-all training facility that would cater to U.S. and foreign special operations units, SWAT teams, and various U.S. Government agencies. Thus it came to be that Blackwater Lodge (www.blackwater-lodge.com) was brought into being. Blackwater, as it is called, is located on the Virginia/North Carolina line just south of Norfolk, VA, an easy drive for the East Coast SEALs and their ancillary units.

Blackwater is the largest privately owned weapons training facility in the United States (5,200 acres of water, woodland, swamp, and upland), and it is believed to be the largest in the world. It offers hostage-rescue, room-clearance, small-boat, general marksmanship, and SWAT training, among other specialties. It also maintains a large drop zone for both static-line and free-fall parachute operations, and a runway is part of its future plans.

Jim Hawes

Jim Hawes' career is one of my favorites. After graduating from UDT Training in 1963 with Harry Humphries, Hawes found himself unable to join the Teams due to poor eyesight. Seems like he suckered the doctors who administered his pretraining visual acuity test by using of contact lenses when they were largely unknown. Problem: His ruse was discovered when his pre-Teams physical was administered. What to do with Hawes became the vexing question at Little Creek, one that was solved in Solomonian fashion by sending him back to the training unit as an instructor (that's where I got to know him, and BOY! Could he run!).

Not having achieved self-actualization as a UDT instructor, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) Hawes managed in 1964 to finagle himself a set of orders to a new SEAL billet at the Naval Support Activity in Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam. While there he was involved in all sorts of derring-do involving Haiphong harbor and PT boats and commando teams. I suspect JFK himself would take second seat to Hawes in PT-boat exploits.

Shortly after leaving the Navy, Hawes



Troy Vaught: Now and then. "I'm getting paid big bucks to do something that I'd pay to do!" How many times have other SEALs made the same remark?



courtesy author

Continued on page 86

omega PROVING ground

CZ-550

Text & Photos by SOF Staff

American

the Czechs have a long and proud history of firearms manufacturing. Readers of *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine are no strangers to the more famous Czech innovations. No doubt we all know that the British BREN, the best light machine gun of World War II, was actually a licensed production of a Czech design. More recently the CZ-75 9mm double-action pistol celebrated its Silver Anniversary. Even Colonel Jeff Cooper, a die-hard M1911 man, has had to give props to this fine dual-action machine, insisting that it be used as the starting point for the ill-fated BREN-10. (It is said that imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.) Thanks in part to the fall of the communism in Eastern Europe, as well as privatization of the company CZ, *Ceska Zbrojovka* (Czech Arms Works) has been able to enter the 21st century with much more emphasis on hunting and sporting firearms.

Recently *SOF* received a sample of the CZ-550 American in .308 Win. Although this is a rifle built with state-of-the-art manufacturing techniques the purchaser will notice immediately that the 550 is essentially an updated 98 Mauser. Any gunshop commando worth his salt will point out the big and beefy full-length extractor claw ensuring the purchaser positive loading and maximum extraction force. This system and its controlled round feeding will be a welcome sight to those who don't quite trust the push feed design and the comparatively tiny stamped steel extractors found on other popular sporters. The fixed ejector found on the CZ 550 American is also a quality feature that is so simple and reliable it has not been significantly improved for more than 100 years.



Upon closer examination the CZ-550 has a few features that are normally only available as a custom option, or not at all. Most noticeable of these items was a detachable magazine. Pressing forward on the magazine release located inside the trigger guard pops the magazine into the off-hand for easy loading and unloading. The detachable magazine is currently only available for .22-250, .243 and .308 calibers. Some feel that detachable magazines are of negligible value, pointing out that it is an accessory that is easily lost and not as reliable as the integral unit. Hogwash! While it is true that some shooters would lose their heads if they weren't attached to their bodies the world would be a better place if we all paid more attention to where we left our gear. I have also found that both the detachable and integral variety of magazines work equally well, given that they are done right.

We did not experience any failures to feed with the CZ unit.



Another unnoticeable little extra was the CZ's adjustable single set trigger. This single-set unit is standard equipment on all CZ center-fire rifles. By pushing forward on the trigger the shooter reduces the overall pressure required to release the hammer and sear engagement. Set triggers are normally found in the form of a double-set system, two triggers that may look similar to those found on a side-by-side or over-under shotgun. While set triggers are great for spy movies this feature is of dubious value to any rifleman and the idea of a set trigger has never really taken the U.S. by storm. Shooters can elect to not use the set feature (most will forget it is even there) The CZ trigger is adjustable and instructions for reducing creep, over-travel and pull weight are right in the manual. It is recommended that shooters have a competent gunsmith do this if you are not 100% sure of your ability to do so. Playing it safe is never as embarrassing as the potential consequences. Having a good trigger to begin with is far better than a set-type but I must admit that valuable or not it is keen gear. Other features included integral optical platform (rings not included), Turkish walnut stock, blued finish, rubber butt pad and two-position safety.

The CZ-550 sent to us was chambered for the popular .308 Winchester cartridge. The 308 (7.62x51mm) was designed for a smaller, lighter and, therefore, easier to carry rifles. This actuality has been lost on the Czechs, as the 550's action is available in only

one size: long. I suppose that hand-loaders could take advantage of this extra action length however I did not greet the extra weight and bolt throw as a welcome addition. Purchasers should take note of this when selecting a caliber.

Marty Bordson at CZ-USA sent us a set of the Millet rings. We equipped the CZ-550 with a Leupold M8 fixed 6-power optic and zeroed it at 250 yards. The CZ rifle was certainly on par, accuracy wise, with any of the better-known American companies' rifles. Our results confirmed the notion that modern rifles seem to be more accurate than modern shooters. At 100 yards with match ammo several 5-shot groups hovered around the magic one-minute of angle, and several with three shots touching. The CZ-550 is certainly up to the task if you are.

Retail price of the CZ 550 American with detachable magazines \$582. CZ currently has two other models available: The CZ550 *Lux* with "Bavarian" style check piece and iron sights and the CZ 550 *FS* a full-stock sporter also with "Bavarian" style check piece and iron sights. Retail prices for all CZ rifles range from \$550 to \$700, depending upon desired features.

CZ-Ceska Zbrojovka, CZ-USA, PO Box 171073, Dept. SOF, Kansas City, KS 66117-0073; phones: (800) 955-4486, (913) 321-1811; fax: (913) 321-2251; website: www.cz-usa.com. ✕



TIMELINE TO TROUBLE

A Calendar Of Saddam's Semi-Excellent Adventure

by Frank Hopkins

Photos: SOF Staff

- **25 Jun 90:** Iraq makes claim on Kuwait territory.
- **1 Jul 90:** British troops arrive to inhibit an Iraqi takeover of Kuwait.
- **17 Jul 90:** Saddam Hussein accuses Kuwait of overproduction and theft of oil from the geologically-shared Rumailia Oil Field, and producing too much which drove the price down.
- **25 Jul 90:** U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, tells Saddam Hussein that the Iraq/Kuwait dispute is an Arab matter, not one that affects the United States; Iraq interprets this as a free hand, subsequent speculation is that the Western powers wanted the near-nuclear Iraqis to do something stupid and reactionable, to give world powers rationale for trimming Iraq's military potential, particularly their WMD development; Iraq masses troops along the Kuwait border.
- **1 Aug 90:** Iraq walks out of talks with Kuwait on Iraqi grievances over oil production and pricing, Kuwaiti loans to Iraq, and Iraqi claims to Kuwaiti territory.
- **2 Aug 90:** Iraq troops and armor invade Kuwait before dawn; Kuwaiti leaders flee to Saudi Arabia; overrun in about an hour,

abuse and plundering of Kuwait begins almost immediately; President Bush freezes Iraqi and Kuwaiti assets; the UN calls on Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces.

- **3 Aug 90:** Kuwaiti forces mount a futile last-ditch resistance, Kuwaiti air assets retreat to Saudi to fight another day; Iraqi troops press to within a few miles of Saudi border.
- **4 Aug 90:** Iraq announces new military government for Iraq-occupied Kuwait; European Community imposes trade embargo with Iraq.
- **5 Aug 90:** President George Bush declares that this aggression "will not stand."



Before the ground assault, Coalition troops did what troops do everywhere: They trained. Here, Egyptian Ranger demonstrates the bare-handed method of butchering a Saudi desert rabbit. Unlike American Rangers, Egyptians do not eat them guts, fur and all.



Coalition Arabic forces train in U.S. M113 APCs. The Kuwait theater was optimum terrain for armor maneuver — although a good proportion of Iraqis tanks were dug in, and abandoned. (right) The streets of Kuwait City — and all roads leading north to the sanctuary of Baghdad — were littered with destroyed Iraqi armor.



- **6 Aug 90:** King Fahd of Saudi Arabia meets with SecDef Richard Cheney to request U.S. military assistance for a feared invasion; Bush begins Operation Desert Shield designed to protect Saudi Arabia; UN economic sanctions are authorized against Iraq.
- **7 Aug 90:** Operation Desert Shield Begins; F-15 Eagles from Langley AFB, Va., arrive in Saudi; contingent from 82nd Airborne is dispatched; U.S. Navy task force sets sail for Gulf.
- **8 Aug 90:** Iraq formally annexes Kuwait as 19th province, citing archaic boundaries; UN orders world-wide embargo on trade with Iraq; Great Britain joins multinational force in the Gulf.
- **9 Aug 90:** UN declares Iraq's annexation of Kuwait fallacious; Iraq closes borders, trapping thousands of Americans and other Westerners in Iraq and Kuwait; U.S. troop strength has jumped to about 200,000.
- **10 Aug 90:** John Warden meets with General Norman Schwarzkopf in Tampa to brief on proposed air campaign; 12 of 20 Arab League states vote to send all-Arab military force to join Americans in defense of Saudi Arabia.
- **12 Aug 90:** U.S. announces interdiction program for Iraqi shipping; first U.S. Operation Desert Shield-related death occurs.

- **13 Aug 90:** Iraqi troops in Kuwait round up American and British visitors from two hotels in Kuwait, for transport to Iraq.
- **15 Aug 90:** Saddam offers to withdraw from Iranian territories and release POWs from Iran/Iraq war in bid to win favor with Tehran against U.S.; foreign nationals in Iraq are ordered to assemble at hotels.
- **20 Aug 90:** Iraq announces it has moved Western hostages to vital military installations for use as human shields.
- **22 Aug 90:** By executive order, President Bush authorizes first call-up of military reservists to active duty for 90 days (subsequently extended to 180 days on 12 Nov.).
- **24 Aug 90:** Iraqi forces surround nine embassies in Kuwait City, including the U.S. mission.



SOF publisher Robert K. Brown rides Kuwaiti M-84 tank (Yugoslav version of Russian T-72, ordered by Kuwait in 1989) into Kuwait City under the dark eclipse of burning oil wells torched by the retreating Iraqis.



• **25 Aug 90:** Military interdiction is authorized by the UN to enforce embargo; approximately 2,000 Americans remain in hiding in Kuwait.

• **28 Aug 90:** Secret Israeli contingent comes to Washington to emphasize probability of Iraqi attack on Israel if a Middle Eastern war breaks out; Saddam begins releasing women, children held hostage.

• **6 Sep 90:** Saudi Arabia agrees to contribute billions toward cost of Operation Desert Shield.

• **9 Sep 90:** Bush, Soviet President Gorbachev meet in Finland, express solidarity in tough stand against Saddam; Bush emphasizes military commitment, Gorbachev emphasizes diplomatic approach.

• **10 Sep 90:** On state TV, Saddam offers free oil to Third World Countries.

• **14 Sep 90:** Iraqi forces storm



Kuwaiti forces were hastily organized, equipped and trained. Gear was good, but varied. This Kuwaiti trainee has U.S. chocolate-chip uniform, and German G3 battle rifle.

various diplomatic missions in Kuwait City.

• **17 Sep 90:** USAF Major General Dugan fired for mentioning potential attacks on Saddam and his consorts; on the final night of the subsequent war, within hours of the ceasefire, two USAF bombers dropped specially designed 5,000-pound bombs on a command bunker 15 miles northwest of Baghdad in an attempt to grease Saddam (close, no cigar).

• **18 Sep 90:** Schwarzkopf tasks four Army planners to begin work for ground offensive.

• **23 Sep 90:** Saddam says he will destroy Israel and destroy Mideast oil fields in response to "strangling" embargo.

• **24 Sep 90:** In search of diplomatic solution, French President Mitterand offers four-stage plan.

• **27 Sep 90:** Iraq orders Kuwaitis to apply for Iraqi citizenship, threatens to hang diplomats sheltering Westerners in their embassy compounds; Emir of Kuwait delivers moving speech to UN on behalf of his occupied country.

• **29 Sep 90:** First of thousands of British ground forces head for Gulf.

• **2 Oct 90:** U.S. Senate backs Bush's deployment of troops to the Gulf.

THE AIR WAR OVER THE GULF

Any airman will enthusiastically assure you that if you control the skies, you will control the battle. Any grunt will just as enthusiastically assert that the battle or war is not over until you fight over and occupy the ground, bunker-by-bunker, house-by-house, inch-by-bloody-inch.

They are both correct. And even the most zealous ground-pounder will admit that the speed with which Coalition forces were able to steam-roll over the forces of the largest military machine in the Gulf was predicated in no small measure by the fact that air power had done its job intelligently, efficiently, thoroughly and with telling effect on the men and machines of the Iraqi military.

From 16 January 1991 to 24 February 1991, Coalition air assets, lead by the U.S. Air Force, began systematically to disembowel Iraq's ability — and the inclination of its individual soldiers — to fight. Early targets were those installations and equipment that could challenge the Coalition's air superiority: AA radar sites, AA missile batteries, air bases and landing strips from which Iraq could launch its own air assets to challenge Coalition fliers as they set about their methodical work. So good were they at this, that of the 234 confirmed Iraqi aircraft losses, 122 were simply escapees who bugged out to the safety of Iran — nearly as many as the estimated 141 that were destroyed in "hardened" aircraft shelters.

Coalition aircraft then set about to "surgically" bomb key Iraqi military targets such as heavily fortified command posts and comms centers, missile launch sites and Iraqi ground forces wherever they could be found. The allied fliers lost no time: Within the first 10 days of the air offensive some 10,000 sorties had been flown. The intensity and spot-on accuracy of laser-guided air-dropped ordnance and guided missiles such as radar-seeking HARMs and Tomahawks surprised even those who delivered these deadly messages. Coalition air power had soon crippled or destroyed Iraq's nuclear, biological and chemical weapons development programs, its air defenses, its offensive air and ballistic missile capability, and its internal state control mechanisms. Then targeting deployed armor and artillery, vehicles and missile launchers, allied fliers began to systematically kneecap Saddam's forces in the field.

Not taking a thing from the brilliant warfare on the ground, even this former grunt must acknowledge that an adversary who has been rendered blind, deaf and lame by air power can be deemed to have been well-"prepped" for the ground forces. By the time the ground offensive began, Saddam's forces in the field — largely unenthusiastic conscripts to begin with — had grown so weary of the fire and brimstone they were receiving from the air that they welcomed the allied ground assault, because at least now there was a tangible enemy to whom they could surrender. Many Iraqi units fought — although briefly — vigorously but incompetently. Many more gave only token resistance, and others still had safe-conduct passes and

white flags at the ready for the first approaching Coalition ground forces. Those forces who fought briefly and gave in may have done so in the face of superior ability — but those who had no intention of putting up a good fight had largely had their minds made up because of the first-rate work done by the allied air assets.

The amount of ordnance used in the air war was staggering. In addition to hundreds of Tomahawk missiles used for precision strikes on high-priority targets deep within Iraq, hundreds of millions of pounds of bombs were dropped, plus tens of thousands of various missiles fired at specific targets. These numbers are even more significant because in large measure these modern munitions are "smart" or precisely guided to their intended target, thus wreak proportionally much more havoc than those of an earlier era.

The sheer quantity of aerial munitions employed in such a short time frame by U.S. forces alone (USAF, Army, Navy, Marines) is staggering. A selected tally by type of ordnance would include:

77,653 Mk 82 500-pound bombs; 19,081 Mk 83 1,000-pound bombs; 12,289 Mk 84 2,000-pound bombs; 43,435 Mk 117 (from B-52) bombs; 17,831 CBU-52 fragmentation bombs; 10,035 CBU-87 combined effect munitions; 1,314 CBU 89/78 (Gator); and 27,897 Mk 20 (Rockeye) bombs. In addition, 4,493 GBU 12 (with laser Mk 82) laser-guided "smart" bombs were dropped. Some 3,065 AGM 114 Hellfire air-to-surface missiles were fired (most, 2,876, by the Army), plus 5,296 AGM-65 Maverick air-to-surface missiles by the USAF and Marines. The Navy and Marines also fired a total of 283 BGM-71 TOW munitions from helicopters, and all forces fired a variety of specialized ordnance, such as radar-seeking HARM missiles, at individual targets.

Although no American air assets were lost in aerial combat, the above air campaign was not without cost. This much amount of activity alone, even in peacetime, would extract a certain attrition rate, and although for the most part ineffective, surface to air missiles and AA fire of various types was lavishly used by defending Iraqi forces. Combat losses to USAF air assets would include two F-15E, three F-16, one F-4G, one EF-111, one AC-130 and three A-10 aircraft. The U.S. Navy lost two F/A-18, five A-6 and one F-14 aircraft, and the Marines lost one OV-10 and two AB-8. Chopper losses among all services were surprisingly light, considering the amount of activity and the hostile environment. Allied forces lost seven Tornados (six UK, one Italy), one A-4 (Kuwait) and one F-5 (Saudi Arabia).

In non-combat losses, the USAF lost one B-52G and one F-16, the Navy lost one F/A-18 and one A-7, and the Marines lost one AV-8. Various allies lost two Tornados and an F-15.

Overall, the Coalition forces started the war with 2,600 aircraft, and lost a total of 44 from all causes; they started with 1,959 rotary-wing assets and lost 17 from all causes. — F.H.

10 Oct 90: GENTCOM "One Corps" concept is announced at White House briefing; war planners hope Saddam is listening.

21 Oct 90: JCS Chairman Gen. Colin Powell flies to Riyadh to discuss offensive plans with Saudis, as their country will be the staging area for planned multi-national force.

31 Oct 90: In a decision kept secret until 8 November, Bush decides to double the U.S. forces deployed to Saudi.

2 Nov 90: Iraq releases statement that "all-out war" will result if it is attacked and that its foes will "curse their destiny."

8 Nov 90: President Bush orders additional deployments to more than 400,000 to give U.S. forces an "offensive option"; an additional 1,200 M1 Abrams tanks are to be moved to Saudi from Germany, in addition to the 800 already slated.

16 Nov 90: Secretary of State Baker rejects Soviet envoy's suggestion that a solution to the Persian Gulf Crisis be linked to the problem of Israeli occupation of land claimed by Palestinians.

19 Nov 90: Iraq deploys 250,000 more troops to Kuwait.

20 Nov 90: Some 45 Democrats file suit in Washington to have President Bush first seek Congressional approval of military operations; suit was eventually thrown out.

22 Nov 90: Bush visits troops in Saudi for Thanksgiving.



Defending the defenders: G.I. stands guard over Patriot anti-ballistic missile launcher in Saudi Arabia. Newly deployed Patriots were not perfect, but saved many lives in Saudi Arabia and Israel from Iraqi SCUD attacks.

We Want to Fight: Please Coalesce

Although the Gulf war was an exercise in superior strategy and tactics, one of the seminal best strategies of the war was to line up allies, at least on paper, before hand. Recruiting was not particularly hard, especially from among former Warsaw-Pact countries wanting to exercise their new independence, from among Gulf states who had an immediate interest in seeing Saddam brought up short, and from among our traditional allies — and from non-traditional allies for whom we had something to trade.

The military coalition consisted of: Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Honduras, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Korea, Spain, Syria, Turkey, The United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, the United Nations as a body condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and supported remedial action. Even states often not considered allies, such as the Soviets who sent naval vessels to the Gulf, were convinced to acquiesce.

Many of those who for various reasons could not come to the fray agreed to send money, including Japan and even Switzerland who was neutral throughout both WW I and WW II. Some \$53 billion was pledged and received, with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait being the largest contributors.

— F.H.

- **28 Nov 90:** Former joint chiefs of staff urge caution in Gulf, to give time for sanctions to take effect.
- **29 Nov 90:** By a historic 12-2 vote, the UN Security Council authorizes the use of "all means necessary" to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait if Saddam does not withdraw by midnight 15 Jan 91.
- **30 Nov 90:** Bush invites Tariq Aziz to Washington, offers to send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad.
- **6 Dec 90:** First shipload of Army's VII Corps equipment from Germany arrives in Saudi; construction is underway for enhanced U.S. military facilities in Saudi.
- **7 Dec 90:** Saddam says he will release all hostages.
- **8 Dec 90:** U.S. evacuates embassy in Kuwait City, but leaves the flag flying.
- **15 Dec 90:** Iraq insists it alone will set date for direct U.S./Iraqi talks in Baghdad.
- **19 Dec 90:** Lt. Gen. Calvin Waller, deputy commander of U.S. forces in Gulf, says U.S. troops would not be ready to mount an offensive by 15 January UN deadline.
- **4 Jan 90:** Iraq agrees to hold its first high-level talks with the United States since the start of the Gulf crisis.
- **9 Jan 91:** James Baker meets with Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Geneva, in a six-hour *pro forma* effort to find a peaceful solution, i.e. convince Iraq withdraw; Aziz says if Iraq is attacked they will *absolutely* attack Israel.
- **10 Jan 90:** U.S. Congress begins debate on Gulf crisis.
- **12 Jan 91:** U.S. Congress authorizes the use of U.S. military



Kuwaiti troops train on M109-series self-propelled artillery, hastily resupplied from various NATO stocks after having been overrun and cleaned out during the Iraqi invasion.

assets in offensive operations — House votes 250-183, Senate votes 52-47.

- **13 Jan 90:** U.N. envoy Perez de Cuelar meets with Saddam and reports that "God only knows" if there will be war. Saddam reiterates that his country is ready to fight to keep hold of conquered Kuwait.
- **15 Jan 91:** UN deadline for Iraqi withdrawal passes; Schwarzkopf reiterates to USAF that Saddam's Republican Guard should be among first targets; U.S. State Department rejects last-minute French peace plan because it links Kuwait and Palestinian issue; world-wide demonstrations for peace.
- **16 Jan 91:** Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater announces, "the liberation of Kuwait has begun"; Allied Operation Desert Storm air war phase begins with cross-border Apache attack at 0238 hours, launch of cruise missiles; Iraq attacks Israel with seven Scuds; U.S. Patriot missiles successfully intercept first Scud over

THE HUMAN COST OF WAR

Iraq went from the fourth-largest army in the world to the second-largest army in Iraq in 100 hours

— Lieutenant General Tom Kelly

In June 1991, U.S. intelligence estimated that more than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers had been killed, 300,000 were wounded, some 150,000 deserted and 60,000 were taken prisoner by Coalition ground forces. At the time, many human rights organizations claimed a much higher number of Iraqis KIA. Subsequent estimates of Iraqi military war deaths have tended to be lower, sometimes dramatically lower. Original numbers were not predicated upon body-counts, but on numbers of troops assumed to be present at the onset of the war, minus those numbers known to have returned/been returned to Iraq at the end of hostilities — and it is now known that original intelligence estimates of the forces Saddam had in the field at the onset of hostilities were inaccurately high, as they were largely predicated on the assumption that known Iraqi units were close to TO&E strength, which they were not.

Current estimates are that Iraq had from 300,000 to 545,000 troops in the Kuwait theater of operations. And some estimates of the actual number of Iraqi combat deaths are considerably lower than original estimates made while the debris was still falling: A report commissioned by the Air Force, "Gulf War Air Power Survey," by T.A. Keaney and E.A. Cohen, estimates there were 10-12,000 Iraqi combat deaths during the air war, and a further

10,000 casualties during the ground war. These numbers were based on an analysis of enemy POW reports. The Iraqi government claims 2,300 civilians died during the air campaign.

But in any terms, the human loss to Iraq was staggering. By comparison, the United States had only 148 KIA — of whom 24% (35) were from friendly fire. The United States suffered an additional 458 wounded, and 121 killed in non-hostile actions. By comparison, in the same 43 days in 1991, almost 10 times as many American civilians died from falling down, as military personnel did in the Gulf War from hostile action. Other Coalition casualties were similarly lopsided in comparison to Iraq's.

Saddam's military machine — and machinery — suffered even more than did his personnel, as hardware was targeted much more often than were his human assets. Iraq started the war with 4,230 tanks, and it lost 4,000 (the Coalition lost 4 *each*, of an initial 3,360). Saddam had 3,330 artillery pieces, and he lost 2,140 due to allied action (the Coalition lost 1 *each*, of 3,633). Saddam started with 2,870 armored personnel carriers and lost 1,856 (the allied lost nine *each*, of 4,050, but most of those losses were due to friendly fire). The Coalition fielded some 2,600 aircraft and lost 44 from all causes: Iraq had some 800, and lost 240 of those. The only area where coalition losses were greater than Iraq's was in helicopters: The coalition started with 1,959 and lost 17 from all causes; Saddam started with 160 and lost seven.

Of Iraq's 44 Army divisions, 42 were found to be combat-ineffective at the end of the war. How many would have been truly combat effective at the onset of the war is moot. — F.H.

Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

- **18 Jan 91:** First USAF air attacks are launched from Turkey; first Iraqi Scuds hit Israel; U.S. Navy losses on attacks on Scud bases begs questions of low-level tactics; Bush authorizes call-up of up to 5 million National Guardsmen and Reservists for up to two years.
- **19 Jan 91:** U.S. pilots David Eberly and Thomas Griffith are shot down; DoD announces deployment of Europe-based Patriot missiles and crews to Israel.
- **20 Jan 91:** In show of support, and to persuade Israel not to enter fray which might weaken Arabic support within the Coalition, U.S. diplomats Lawrence Eagleburger and Paul Wolfowitz go to Tel Aviv.
- **22 Jan 91:** U.S. Navy attacks Iraqi oil tanker — Schwarzkopf is not amused; Brits stop low-altitude attacks on Iraqi airstrips — effective but costly.
- **23 Jan 91:** Iraqi aircraft shelters become targets of intensified attack.
- **25 Jan 91:** Iraq sabotages Kuwaiti oil transmission facilities to create massive oil slick in Gulf.
- **26 Jan 91:** U.S. Marines in Oman participate in Operation Sea Soldier IV, high-profile rehearsal for amphibious landing on Kuwaiti beaches that was never to be; in effort to stem Iraqi sabotage of Kuwaiti oilfields and Gulf waters, U.S. F-111s blast the oil manifolds at Al Ahymadi.
- **29 Jan 91:** Iraqi force attacks Khafji and other Saudi border positions; Coalition air assets begin combat patrols to keep Iraqi air assets from bugging out to Iran (many make it, Iran never returns planes).
- **30 Jan 91:** SecDef Cheney sends Delta Force to Saudi to hunt down mobile Scud launchers; U.S. troop level in Gulf tops 500,000.
- **31 Jan 91:** Khafji is recaptured; Iraqis capture first U.S. female POW.
- **1 Feb 91:** Final Tomahawk missiles are launched during attack on Baghdad airfield.
- **2 Feb 91:** Schwarzkopf pulls pin on amphibious landings in Kuwait, but overt preparations have already served to convince Iraqis to tie-up forces against such a landing.
- **3 Feb 91:** U.S. battleships shell targets in Kuwait.
- **5 Feb 91:** hunter-killer teams of U.S. air assets fly first "tank-plinking" missions.
- **6 Feb 91:** Final 3rd Armored Division equipment arrives in Saudi, completing VII Corps logistic move; Jordanian King Hussein (a

Continued on page 82



SOF correspondent Mike Williams, left, and *Reader's Digest* correspondent Malcolm McConnell visit with MP on the road north. Fortunately, the 100-hour war required more MPs to direct the flow of Coalition traffic in, and Iraqi POWs out, than medics to pick up the pieces.

Back To Basics

WITH 42 COMMANDO

Her Majesty's Royal Globo-Bobbies



Individual SA-80 rifles gets mixed reviews. Senior NCOs scorn it as a weapon that "falls apart." Its Bullpup action is, however, handy in the confines of vehicles or helicopters.



TEXT & PHOTOS BY JIM BARTLETT & ANGELICA ALLINI

Unbeknownst to any of us during our visit, only weeks after returning home to UK, 42 Commando was called upon to do just what they had been training for, a NEO in Sierra Leone. When the failed UN mission there collapsed into disaster and the brigand savages of the RUF closed in on Freetown, British policymakers did not hesitate. They didn't have to. They have a force on hand that can be completely trusted to do the job with a minimum of fuss or foul-ups.

It was hot, dusty and dry in the carefully camouflaged positions on the edge of the airfield. 42 Commando, Royal Marines, had settled into their defensive positions along the unnamed dirt strip the night before and now sat scanning the tree line 200 meters away. If intelligence was right, their “peaceful” deployment to this place would not go uncontested. Their initial mission of evacuating foreign nation-

als and humanitarian types had gone smoothly enough, but ever shifting politics had sucked the battalion in deeper than it had anticipated.

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Bowkett gave SOF the skinny. “There’s been some probing patrols and a number of contacts out on the forest trails. The situation has deteriorated and we’ve been committed to support the friendly defense forces. We’ve been given the mission to secure the airstrip and we’ve dug in for deliberate defense. We came here on a NEO [Non-combatant Evacuation Operation] but the rules of engagement have changed, again.”

As we sat nibbling British army biscuits next to the command post, Bowkett’s number two kept up communications with the patrols. As expected, things didn’t remain quiet for long. Somewhere in the trees several shots rang out and then a long burst of machine-gun fire. Everyone cocked an ear and looked across the dusty strip. Another

probe or the real thing? A second or so later a heavy fusillade broke out and the roar of heavy engines rose up, drowning out the gunfire. Squealing and screeching of tank treads let all concerned know; there was armor out there and it was hungry. This was not going to be a probe. The only question now was where on our 300-meter front were they going to hit.

From out of the woods an Austrian-built “PUCH” light truck came roaring across the airfield in a cloud of dust. It was the ambush patrol heading back like a terrier with a rat in its teeth. They had fulfilled their part of things. Get the enemy to tip his hand, “Shaken the battle space” and were getting the hell out of Dodge. No sense trying to mix it up with tanks in the bushes, let the Milan gunners have a crack from the main line. They roared into the position, headed up the communications road and stood down, ready to act as the mobile reserve.

Colonel Bowkett was in the CP when the

(clockwise from right)

Deployable as regular infantry, Marines from 42 Commando brush up on basic defensive tactics from their 3-man fighting hole.

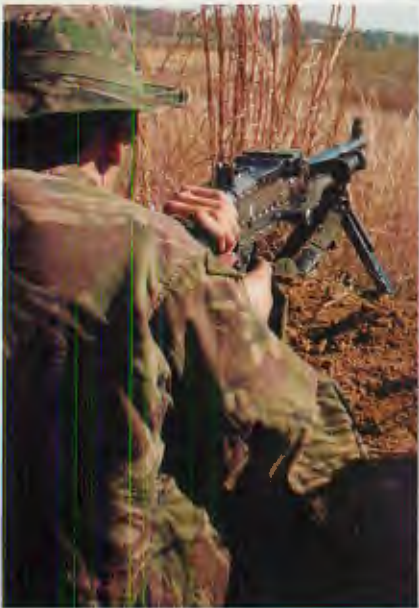
Tripod mounted 7.62 GPMG gives cover along fixed firing lanes beyond 1,000 meters. The standard since WWI, range cards were complete and handy for nighttime engagements.

Man-portable MILAN Anti-tank missile systems provide effective defense against armor attack. Good camouflage and well-laid-out positions are a matter of course.

GPMG gunner in the light-support role watches over the contested airfield. Portable with a punch out to 1,000 meters.



Angelica Allini



first vehicles crawled out of the trees, three-abreast, heading into the far left flank of the line. He was giving orders to start in with a pre-sighted barrage from his 81mm mortars when the tanks paused and laid down a brisk fire into our area with their heavy machine guns. While only slightly exposed, he was hit. Several Commandos sprung forward and carried him to the rear. Nonplussed, his number two picked up the radio handset and continued the orders where he had left off. The senior NCO back at the mortars called out, "On the way."

Setting off with our "keeper," Lieutenant Graham White, Royal Navy liaison and field expedient PIO, we headed towards the sound of the guns. The hostiles were pushing hard on the left and a crescendo of gunfire had broken out there, marked by various colors of smoke rising up over the scene of the fight. Through it we could see hostile infantry spilling out from around the tanks.

Staying below the line of the hill we pulled up in some trees and started to see

stragglers coming down off the line as the level of fire increased. Isolated from direct support by the straight and level nature of the airfield positions, the platoons on the left were hard pressed.

No sooner had this become apparent then the problem was being resolved. Reinforced by a platoon from the right flank, the ambush patrol came roaring down the communications road in two "PUCH" trucks, pulled up on the reverse slope of the position and disgorged the troops. They quickly formed up under the shelter of the slope and began a counterattack into the left of the attackers. The sudden appearance of 30 or so howling Royal Marine Commandos crashing in on their left more than took the fight out of the hostiles and they started scampering back into the tree line, minus two of their tanks.

Business As Usual

As things settled down, we headed back to the CP. We arrived to find Bowkett, alive

and well, smiling contentedly as he watched his number two calmly assess casualties and order up fresh stocks of ammo. "It's always good form to kill yourself off right when things get thick. Keeps your 2nd on his toes," he commented. "After all, in the real thing, I'm as expendable as the next man and my officers right down to my junior men have got to be ready to pick up and carry on."

As the skirmish ended, we sat and talked with this most remarkable soldier and his men as the "Hostiles," actually U.S. Marines from Quantico, Virginia, roared off to the nearest bar in their LAVs. Another exercise and another day's work at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia, a post fast becoming a favorite training area for troops from the U.K.

"It's all about basics. These skills are perishable, if you don't practice them you lose them," Col. Bowkett intoned as if he was tutoring a class at Sandhurst. We were happy to listen. "Once you've got the fun-



Pre-sighted 81mm mortars get in on the action. They provide the Commando with portable, yet devastating, close-support fire out to 5,650 meters from a variety of projectiles. (below) A soldier's soldier, Lt. Colonel Bob Bowkett, surveys his troop deployment during a "NEO" gone astray. Trust and emphasis on basics keeps the troops of 42 Commando in fighting shape.



damentals down, you can concentrate on the special skills, things people tend to associate more with commando forces. Right now we've come off a 6-month tour in Northern Ireland. It's very good in some terms; individual skills and patrolling, but not so good for large-scale ops. Then we spent most of the spring giving "dog and pony" shows around London. The lads like it but it's terrible on readiness. So when I had the chance to come here, I jumped at it."

We had been curious. Why A.P. Hill, Virginia? For most, it's a smallish, backwater post used mostly by the National Guard. But, we forget that compared to training areas in Britain, it's huge.

According to Bowkett, A.P. Hill is two-thirds bigger than anything available in their home areas with half the traffic. "Coming here is an opportunity for me to get hold of my battalion again and get them back into the conventional. We can do large movements and not stumble over anyone else. It's also very in step with the missions we're finding more and more called upon to do; pick up the whole show, move it halfway around the world and hit the ground running. We can be anywhere in the world on five-to-10 days' notice and support ourselves in the field for weeks if necessary. Just getting out of barracks in U.K. is an exercise. If you don't practice it, it's just a nightmare."

Good training, indeed. 42 Commando had deployed 3,000 miles on short notice, arrived straight into a field environment and hadn't left it. For four weeks the troops had been living in foxholes and bivvies. Except for a few passes, no one left the woods-

including officers.

They didn't seem very concerned about this. It's what they signed on for and most of the troops had multiple enlistments under their belt. Average time in service was five years or more and many *SOF* spoke to had 10 and over. "We take care of our men," remarked Bowkett, "They joined up to be soldiers and that's what we do. At the same time, most of them want to see the world, so when we're finished here they'll all get a seven-day pass to go wherever they want."

When questioned about the wisdom of turning 600 Royal Marine Commandos loose on unsuspecting American civilians, Bowkett summed it up. "I work on the principle that they're 18, old enough to vote, old enough to drive. I can take them on patrol in Northern Ireland with a live weapon. Frankly, they're adults. They repay my respect. I've had only six disciplinary cases in 20 months."

After meeting many troops and NCOs, some of whom had been at Goose Green, it was obvious that retention was not a problem, nor was wasted time on things like sensitivity training. A six-month stint on the Northern Irish border was constantly referred to as "Good training."

Her Majesty's Royal Globo-Bobbies

More and more NEOs are the most probable spectrum of conflict that a unit such as 42 Commando will get involved in. During WW II and the Cold War, Royal Commandos shared a role very similar to our own Army Rangers: Hit hard, hit fast and move-out or, "Shake the battle space," as Col. Bowkett called it. Today, while they maintain these skills and routinely work with the SBS (Special Boat Squadron) and the SAS (Special Air Service) they can switch over to act as conventional infantry without missing a beat. And that's what they are being called in to do more and more.

As small brush wars turn into main events on CNN and Humanitarian NGO-types scatter like quail, policy makers in the U.K. need a highly mobile force that can hit the ground and make it's mandate stick.

With high rates of retention and excellent unit cohesion, 42 Commando represents the highest form of the organizational art. Officers are hand-picked, not mass-produced in questionable university settings. The officer's school is 15 months with a probationary period of a year thereafter. These officers stay with their units, not shuffled around from one career-punching post to another. As a result, they know their men and the men know them.

When they are assigned away from their unit it's always someplace worthwhile. Every officer *SOF* spoke with had tales to tell of hot spots around the globe, from Northern Iraq and Ireland to Bosnia and Kosovo. And when they are done in such places, they return to their parent unit to pass on what they have learned.

Colonel Bowkett recalled his tour in

Continued on page 90

DOWN AND DIRTY IN SIERRA LEONE

Shortly after their trip to Fort A.P. Hill's training grounds, the men of 42 Commando saddled up and deployed for a real-world NEO in the embattled republic of Sierra Leone. Familiar to many *SOF* readers, the conflict in the tiny East African nation has sunk to depths of depravity gruesome by even Africa's standards. In early May, RUF rebels under Foday Sankoh derailed a UN-brokered peace agreement and began advancing on Freetown, brushing aside the UN Peacekeeping force and taking hundreds hostage.

As foreigners and residents verged on the edge of panic, U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair put his "doctrine of international community" to the test and sent British forces to restore order. Spearheaded by Britain's famed Parachute Regiment, the operation drew forces from across the rapid-response spectrum, including 42 Commando as the primary back-up force. (See "Brit Paras Play Ruf in Sierra Leone," *SOF*, Dec. 2000)

As explained to *SOF* in Virginia, 42 Commando entered the engagement as an infantry battalion ready to dish out destruction against anyone who challenged their mission objectives. As a cornerstone of the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces 42 commando poses an impressive arsenal of weapons. Standard to the TOE and along for the ride in Sierra Leone were;

- Individual SA-80 rifles and squad auto variant
- 24 x MILAN anti-armor missile launchers (range 1,950m).
- 9 x 81mm mortars (range 5,650m).
- 9 x 51mm patrol mortars (range 1,000m).
- 100 x 94mm "Carl Gustav" rocket launchers (four per section).
- 13 x General Purpose Machine Guns. (FN GPMG 7.62)
- 16 Snipers (armed with L96 7.62mm rifle).
- 18 x .50 cal. Browning Machine Guns
- 12 x .50 cal Infantry Support Weapons (scoped).

Also added to the mix of organic infantry weapons was the 29 Commando Brigade Royal Artillery whose three batteries of 105mm light guns outclassed anything in the country on the ground. (Except perhaps Neil Ellis and his Mi-24 HIND gunship)

In addition to raw infantry firepower, 42 Commando arrived on the scene aboard the Amphibious Helicopter Carrier HMS OCEAN carrying 2 RAF Chinooks, 4 Sea Kings, 2 Lynxes and 2 Gazelles. Also in the naval mix was aircraft carrier HMS Illustrious with her complement of Sea Harriers and two Class 22 Frigates, HMS Chatham and HMS Argyll.

Once ashore, the commando deployed heavily armed Land Rover "Defenders," each equipped with a .50 cal BMG and 7.62 GPMG as well as Hagglund all-terrain carriers and Austrian built "PUCH" light trucks. This gave the commandos unparalleled mobility over the strung out fighters of the RUF and allowed the troops to quickly seal off their assigned areas and support the Paras pushing towards Rogheri Junction and Port Loko.

Over the years, the war in Sierra Leone has gone from bad to worse. Since the UN-sponsored ejection of Executive Outcomes, simple banditry to the massacre of entire villages and barbarities such as hacking off the limbs of small children has become commonplace. One unit, reported in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, adopted American "Gangsta-rapper" Tupac Shakur as their cultural icon and burned their way through the countryside clad in his concert memorabilia.

High on drugs and brandishing an assortment of modern assault weapons they proved, however, to be no match for the disciplined forces of the Joint Rapid Reaction Forces. After suffering heavy casualties at the hands of the Paras during one encounter, the RUF for the most part left the "Mad dogs and Englishmen" alone and contented themselves with harassing beleaguered UN forces and foreign journalists.

The Sierra Leone deployment has served fresh warning to other populist forces running amok that if the British Navy pulls up in your harbor or Paras start falling from the sky, they mean business. With superb organization, superior leadership and enough hardware to tip the scales against any aggressor, the armed forces of Great Britain will carry out their mandate with extreme prejudice.

— J. B.

Brass Hats

versus

Black Berets

Making Heroes At The Drop Of A Hat

by Col. Mike Peck (Ret.)

Maybe it's all in the spirit of democracy; maybe it's professional jealousy — hard to say, but the American Army brass has always been enthusiastically against the idea of elite forces anywhere within the organization.

Other armies do not appear to have been quite so afflicted by this particular phobia, and, during and subsequent to WWII, a number of countries adopted berets of distinctive colors to both recognize and reward servicemen who successfully completed arduous training programs and went on to join all-volunteer units that were universally acknowledged as being special.

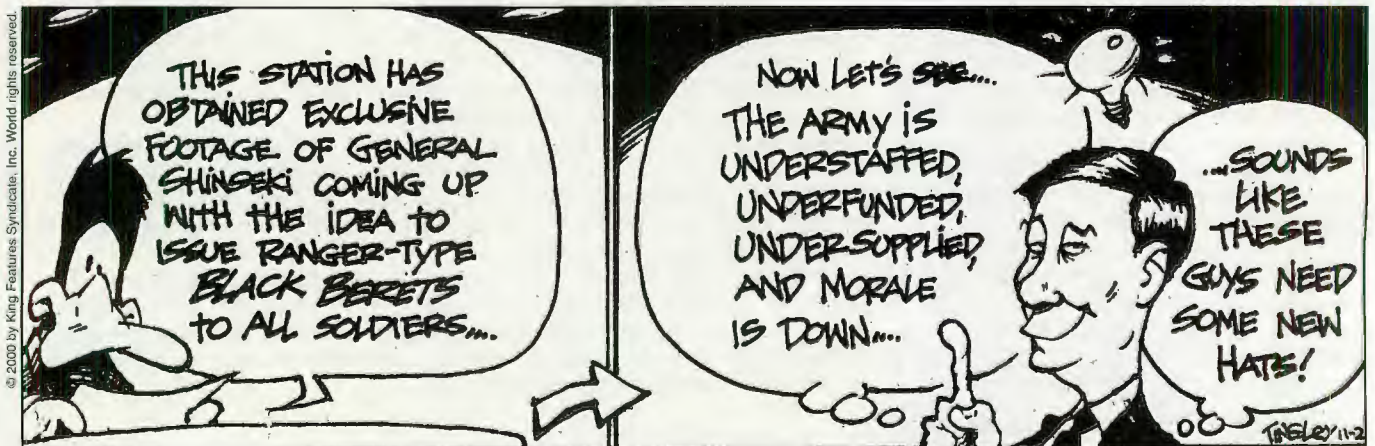
The U.S. Army resisted this trend until the early '60s, when then-Brigadier General Bill Yarborough successfully bypassed the uniformed bureaucracy to gain authorization for the distinctive green beret now worn by all Special Forces troopers. He accomplished this by appealing directly to President Kennedy, when the latter was observing a Special Forces capabilities demonstration at Fort Bragg. That must have been a bitter pill for the chairborne crowd in Washington and Saigon to swallow.

They found a venue to express their suppressed outrage during 1965-66 in Vietnam when they discovered that Special Forces sol-

diers were brazenly brandishing exotic weapons on combat operations — meaning the same World War II-vintage arms that the Strike Force troops used. No more Thompsons, Grease Guns, or M1A1 carbines — at least not off-site. This was followed by a prohibition against SF personnel wearing tiger-stripe camouflage uniforms, although this was what the CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Group) soldiers wore when on patrol. *Camouflage*, indeed! We'll show those swaggering upstarts a taste of discipline, by jingo! Only when it was pointed out that it might be prudent to blend in with the indigenous troops, which was difficult for an American to do even under the best of circumstances, were a dizzying set of rules and regulations established to govern when and under what circumstances Special Forces members could wear "tiger suits." Unbelievable!

Then, in the late 1970s, after U.S. Airborne units had quietly adopted the maroon beret, General Bernie Rodgers, once he ascended as Chief of Staff of the Army, decreed that maroon berets were *verboten*. Only after his welcomed departure did the colorful berets blossom once again on the heads of the trolly troopers. Sadly, these incidents constitute only the tip of the iceberg.

Old habits and prejudices die hard, it seems, and now the Army is



about to go through another similar thrash. The current Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, recently told guests at an AUSA (Association of the U.S. Army) luncheon that he was so moved by a visit to the Special Operations Command the previous week that he decided to upgrade the entire U.S. Army. His plan was to enhance the agility, deployability, and strategic responsiveness of all personnel, but did not entail a regimen of harder training, tougher standards, or more demanding performance. Rather than requiring anyone to work up a sweat to achieve this laudable goal, General Shinseki is simply going to award everyone in the force a black Ranger beret.

The solution to elite formations has now been reversed, and, instead of denying them their distinctive headgear, the Head Brass Hat is going to dilute the beret as a symbol of excellence by issuing one to everybody in the Army. Thus, *everybody will be elite!*

Of course, this is all being done for the greater good of all, in an effort to shore up sagging morale and reverse the disenchantment that many junior personnel are expressing (with their feet), as they leave the service in alarming numbers. To this end, and to make everyone feel good about him (her)self, the Chief of Staff will celebrate the Army's Birthday on 14 June by waving a field marshal's baton somewhere, while banners unfurl and trumpets blow, which will bring about a mystical transformation of the entire force. Once this numinous conversion has taken effect and everyone has been declared a super-soldier, he (she) will then be awarded a black Ranger beret. At the termination of this ceremonial seance, and appropriately garlanded with a black beanie, everyone will have the strength of ten.

Why didn't somebody think of this before?

In his AUSA address, General Shinseki admitted to a one-week incubation period from inspiration to decision, and during his speech tasked the details of implementation to the Sergeant Major of the Army. It seems doubtful that this initiative could have been staffed through appropriate channels in one week, and almost certainly must have circumvented the normally conservative uniform board, which is supposed to have the final say on military apparel. Whatever the case, the ill-conceived beret decision has unleashed a torrent of protest.

Five minutes of conversation with anyone who ever earned a beret — green, maroon, or black — would probably have revealed the folly of this scheme. In addition to the Rangers, the entire SpecOps community is livid that the hard-earned (both physically and politically) beret is about to lose its distinctive significance. This indignation is not limited to active-duty personnel, but has galvanized the retired community, as well.

A highly decorated spokesman for both the U.S. Ranger Association and the 75th Ranger Association, flatly stated that General Shinseki's action is an insult, as well as a collective and official slap in the face, to everyone who ever volunteered for an Airborne, Ranger, or Special Forces unit and completed the arduous training. A former Ranger writing to the editors of *USA Today* stated that General Shinseki's dictum "steps on the graves of every Ranger who gave his life for his country." Keith Idema, in a letter to the edi-

tor of the *Fayetteville Observer*, astutely observed that, to carry his theory to its logical conclusion, General Shinseki should "issue every single soldier a Congressional Medal of Honor," complete with an appropriate ceremony, then, when each was "instantaneously transformed into an All-American ... hero," we could reduce the Army to 10,000 super-warriors, thereby "saving a ton of money."

This certainly makes as much sense, and would be even more effective than the present design to create an elite army by decree. Since General Shinseki never wore a beret, and probably does not understand its significance, he would be on firmer and more familiar ground in his quest for collective military excellence, if he were to issue everyone four stars to wear around instead of a black beret. Then everyone in the Army would be a consummate careerist, would get along by going along, would never make waves, and would be socially sensitive and politically correct. Those attributes seem to be

much more important today than the physical or moral courage demanded of a qualified Ranger.

An old military saw states that "there are old Rangers and there are bold Rangers, but there are no old, bold Rangers." Maybe it is because of this that the overall erosion of traditional values within America itself — the diminished

importance of hard work, the dilution of standards, and the concept that social mores are all relative — seems to have crept implacably into the U.S. military establishment, as well. Where are the selfless giants and heroes? Either they have "gone to graveyards, every one" as in the Vietnam-era folk song, they were squeezed out because they did not buy into the party line, or they walked because they were tired of official clichés and hypocrisy draped in the American flag.

The warrior ethic is rapidly fading from the scene, and, as long as America can dispassionately bomb third-world countries from 15,000 feet and launch cruise missiles at all the usual suspects from extended distances, maybe elite forces, along with their quaint concepts of professional excellence, valor, honor, and brotherhood, are as obsolete as horse cavalry.

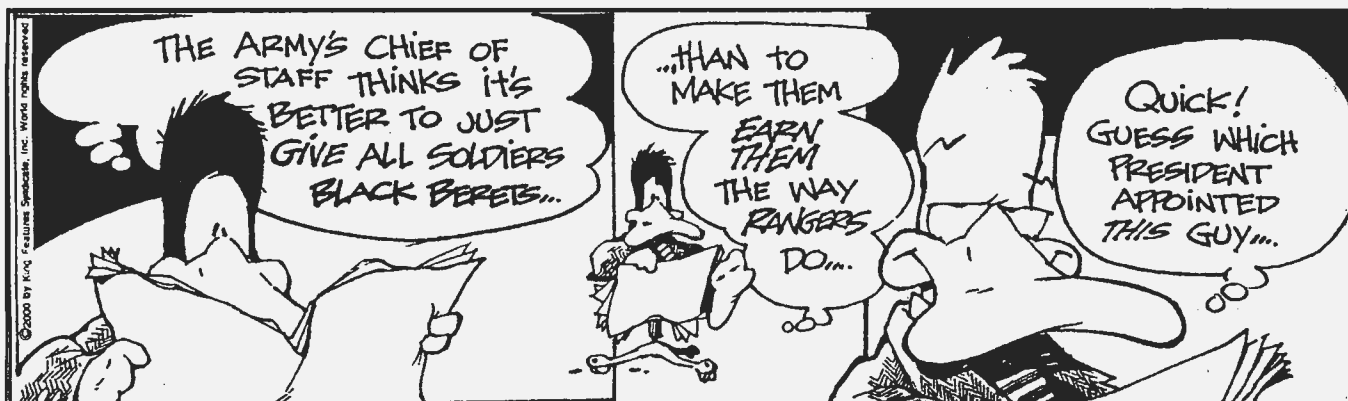
The Army's recent recruiting catchphrase, "Join the Army and be all you can be" should be changed to "Join the Army and we will make you neat and elite — at the drop of a hat."

The author received his green beret in 1964, and subsequently served as the commander of a "Hot Team" in the 7th SFGA. He volunteered for the 5th and spent an extended tour in Vietnam as an A-Team XO at Phu Tuc, and as an assistant S-3 at C-2 in Pleiku.

He received a black beret in 1966, when assigned as an instructor and the S-3 of the Florida Ranger Camp — back when it was at Field Seven. He worked with Charlie Beckwith, who was the Camp Commander, in preparing a study crafted to convince the Army that it needed to reconstitute the Ranger Battalions. Apparently someone read it.

He wore a maroon beret from 1976 to 1979 while assigned as the XO of the 1-505, and while serving as the SGS of the 82nd Airborne Division. He wore one again from 1983 to 1985 while working with SpecOps at Fort Bragg. ✕

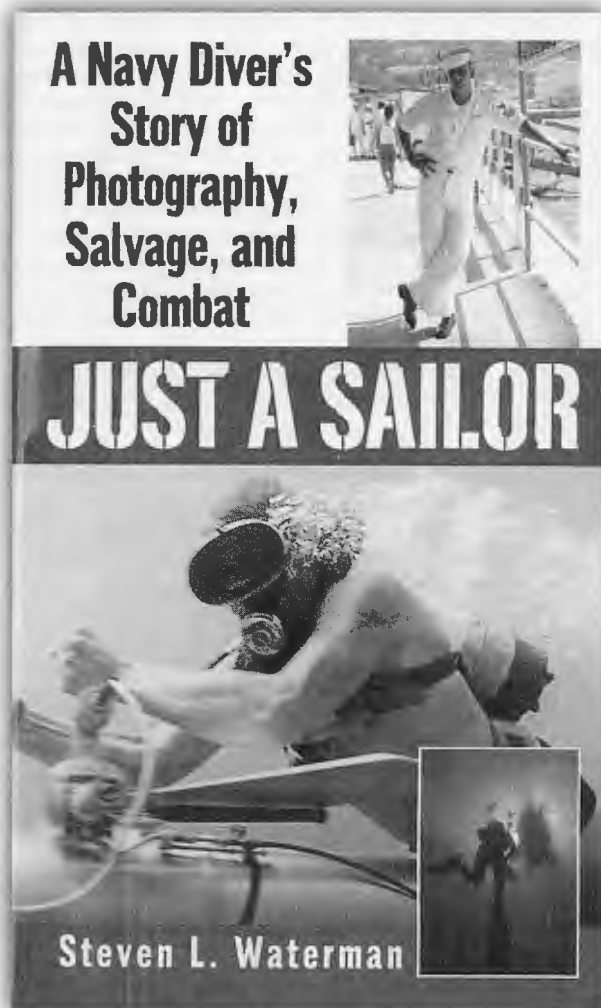
Rather than requiring anyone to work up a sweat to achieve this laudable goal, General Shinseki is simply going to award everyone in the force a black Ranger beret.



PASS IN REVIEW

Just A Sailor

by Steven L. Waterman, 2000; published by The Ballentine Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York. 284 pages, \$6.99 (\$11 for an autographed copy at www.justasailor.com/thebook.html). Also available at Amazon.com. Reviewed by Capt. Larry Bailey, USN (Ret.).



Every now and then I encounter a book that evokes “the way it was” in such a manner as to awaken long-dormant memories and stimulate sounds, smells, and feelings that bring me back to places I’ve been and things I’ve done. One such book was Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which so accurately captured the sights and sounds and attitudes of the small-town South.

Steve Waterman’s first book, *Just a Sailor*, evokes and stimu-

lates in much the same fashion.

To tell the truth, I’ve read so many military “I-was-there” books that I dreaded reading this one, even though I have known Waterman for several years. My incentive to read *Sailor* coincided with a visit to my mother-in-law’s house a couple of months ago. Starting the book out of a sense of obligation to Waterman and a desire to make myself invisible to mother-in-law, I quickly found myself transported back in time and place to the Navy of the 1970s. I read the entire book at a single sitting, so fascinating was it to relive the events of the world the author documents so well.

There’s nothing to commend a book to a reader like its propensity to confirm one’s own attitudes; Waterman got inside my own head with some of his observations about life in the Navy of his era. One example involves a Navy lieutenant of my own acquaintance about whom he writes. This individual was viewed by his superiors, peers, and juniors alike as borderline incompetent—exactly the opinion voiced by the author!

Just a Sailor chronicles life in the Navy I knew and with sailors and officers I still know, especially those with whom I dealt aboard the Naval Amphibious Base, at Little Creek, Virginia. Strangely, even though we were aboard the same command, Naval Inshore Warfare Command Atlantic (he worked in the photo shop and I in Operations), we cannot remember ever meeting. However, we shared more than a handful of friends. Pat Badger, Dean Nelson, and Slator Blackiston—those names conjure up many a Little Creek memory.

Waterman’s narrative is unique in that he doesn’t use the power of the pen to promote his own point of view. While it is clear that his attitudes toward the world in general and the Navy in particular are those of a man who loves his country and his service, he doesn’t try to foist his views on the reader. He simply reconstructs people, places, and things as he saw them, and, from this reviewer’s perspective, he does so masterfully.

Waterman is particularly adept in describing “what it was like” when on patrol with his Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) 13 teammates in Vietnam. Details of slogging, crawling, and swimming through and over Vietnam’s swamps, beaches, canals, and rice paddies while avoiding hostile evoked a lot of memories of my own time in that country. I could almost smell the mud and hear the noises, so accurate is his account.

For a sailor who had never gone through UDT/SEAL training, Waterman managed to get shot at more than “just a sailor” could ever expect. In fact, there were SEALs who spent six-month tours in Vietnam who were on the receiving end of enemy fire fewer times than he, yet he treats those events as just routine occurrences.

Why Waterman never went through Basic UDT/SEAL (BUD/S) training is a matter of some interest, since he not only operated with the Teams but possessed the training and inclination to do “Team things.” He explains how fate intervened when it appeared that he would get orders to BUD/S.

Waterman deals with one subject about which I, a pukin’ officer, have very little knowledge—the social life of a 1970s’ enlisted man. I’ll say one thing—it was interesting! His accounts of barracks life, on-the-beach escapades, and love and marriage are riveting! Olongapo City (Philippines), Coronado (California), and Virginia Beach are described in loving detail, as is his romantic life both back home and in the Navy.

Steve Waterman has performed a unique service to the baby-boomers who passed their young-adult years in the U.S. Navy.

Those of that generation will not only recognize many of the places they went and the people they knew, but also the attitudes they felt during the 1970s. He has also performed a service to those who have wondered what it was like to be in the U.S. military during the days of the anti-Vietnam riots. Through his eyes they can see and feel and hear exactly how it was.

And that is the genius of Steve Waterman—to capture a decade-plus of Navy life in such a way as to make those who were “there” think they were there again. He also enables those who were not there to experience what it was like to be diver, combat swimmer, Viet Cong-hunter, photographer, and “just a sailor” in the U.S. Navy of the 1970’s. *Just a Sailor* belongs on the bookshelf of every student of that era. Two thumbs-up!

War Story

by Jim Morris, 1979; paperback published by St. Martin's Paperbacks, New York; hardcover edition published by Paladin Press, P.O. Box 1307, Boulder, CO 80306; www.paladin-press.com; 369 pages; \$6.99. Reviewed by Rob Krott.

For several years I have read and re-read a well-thumbed and dog-eared paperback of *War Story* by Jim Morris and have occasionally acquired a few battered copies at used bookstores as gifts for friends. First published in 1979 and out of print since 1991, *War Story* was reissued in hardcover in 1994 by its original publisher, Paladin Press. It has since undergone 14 subsequent editions, including six in paperback, as well as a Military Book Club edition. A must-read for any veteran or student of military history, it is now available again in paperback from St. Martin's Paperbacks.

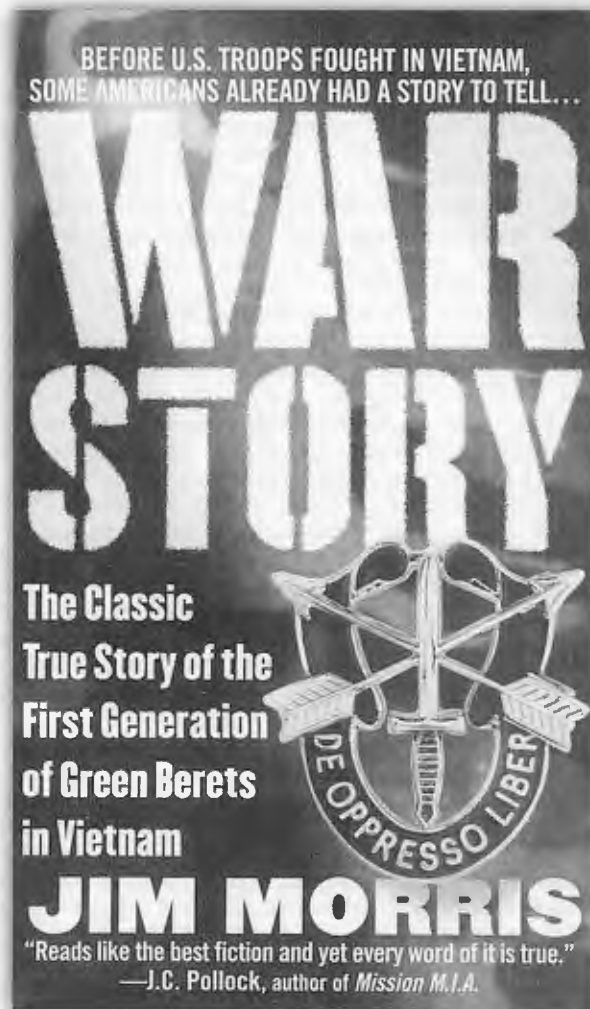
Published only four years after the fall of Saigon, *War Story*, was the first of what has become a plethora of non-fiction Vietnam War memoirs. But because of the political climate at the time of its initial publication this potential blockbuster bestseller was all but ignored by the New York publishing houses. *War Story* (named after the book's epigraph “The difference between a fairy tale and a war story. ...”) was conceived during the author's convalescent leave in 1965 after his second tour of Vietnam. From 1965 until its publication in 1978 he rewrote it a total of six times (eventually including his third tour of duty from 1967 to 1968) and “each time collected enough letters of rejection to paper a wall.” While Robin Moore's *The Green Berets* was such a sensation in 1965 that it inspired a John Wayne movie, and the same photo of Army Special Forces Staff Sergeant Barry Sadler would grace both the book's paperback cover and Sadler's top hit record, by the early 1970s when Morris wrote *War Story* the attitude towards the Vietnam War and America's elite warriors was colored by the anti-war movement, My Lai, the bombing of Cambodia, and the media's slanted reporting on Tet. Vietnam wasn't a popular literary topic. America had yet to undergo the “healing” process and as a nation it was happy just to put the Vietnam War in the past. Like our veterans and the MIAs-POWs the Vietnam War was out of sight and out of mind.

Morris begins his memoir with the emotionally charged details of his recurring nightmare, a vivid and detailed replay of the fire-fight in which he had his left testicle shot off and was almost killed.

In the nightmare though, he is eventually killed. “The dream was becoming more stylized ... like a war movie with me as hero ... I would get weird close-up shots of jungle boots charging up the hill ... of the rifle jamming, then stills from my own eyes ... but it always ended the same way. Me dead.” The nightmare causes him to wake sweating in fear as many as 20 times a night.

He ends the book with an emotionally charged memory, also. In a heart-tugging coda, Morris recounts the scene. While standing in an Army hospital, his crippled right arm hanging at his side, his useless fingers attached to a mechanical brace, he watches as the sun sets and the color guard lowers the flag; and tells us that as the flag is lowered “a feeling of almost overwhelming sadness, almost grief, came over me.” As Morris attempts to salute the colors with his damaged right hand he stands “crying like a baby because I couldn't do it right.”

A professional soldier who began military school as an 11-year-old, Morris joined the Army and Special Forces where he rose to the rank of major. He volunteered for three tours in Vietnam and received four Purple Hearts and four Bronze Stars among numerous other decorations before a medical discharge for wounds cut his



career short. After Vietnam and graduate school Morris traveled to Cambodia, ostensibly to cover the war for *Rolling Stone*, but in actuality he was searching for old Montagnard friends. He became the basis for "Marty Satterfield" in Haney Howell's *Road Runners*, a novel about war correspondents during the Cambodian War. Besides four novels Morris has also written *The Devil's Secret Name* and *Fighting Men*. *Operation Dumbo Drop*, a Disney movie starring Ray Liotta and Danny Glover, is based on a story Morris published in *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine in 1980.

Jim Morris is a gifted story-teller and his book should be read for his Ludwig Faistenhammer and Larry Dring war stories alone. But at its heart *War Story* is the tale of Jim Morris, not an examination of the Vietnam War or even the role of Special Forces. *War Story* is Jim Morris' story and the real subject of the book is Captain Jim Morris, U.S. Army Special Forces. Through him we experience just one of the Vietnam War's innumerable "war stories." It is, admittedly, a participant's interpretation of events. He offers up a good account of what it was like to be on the ground during the Montagnard revolt, to fight for survival during the Tet Offensive in Nha Trang, and to serve in the U.S. Army's Special Forces during its hey-day in Vietnam. Regarding the Tet Offensive, Morris is shocked to find that while on the battlefield he is obviously one of the victors, at home his countrymen believed differently. Summing up his Vietnam experience Morris quotes Michael Herr's *Dispatches*, "Vietnam was what we had instead of happy childhoods."

This is a book by a soldier who is proud of his service, an experienced and consummate warrior who without a second thought or any moral retrospection whatsoever begs God to please send him some VC to kill for his birthday. He is happy to have fought and reveled in his duty with troops in the field. For this reason Morris took a dim view of his impending promotion to field-grade rank. "If I wasn't careful I would be promoted to Major soon, and there is no job in the Army that I was aware of past the rank of Captain, that is any fun for a guy who likes to run in the woods."

Morris wanted to stay "in the woods" at all costs and fought his reassignment as a Public Affairs Officer and editor of *The Green Beret*, the 5th Special Forces Group's news organ, declaring, "I don't want an outstanding efficiency report — I want to command an A-team!" And on being the commander of a Special Forces A-team Morris says, "I would rather command an A-Detachment than be president of the United States or win the Nobel prize for literature. ..."

Yes, it is without remorse or excuse that Morris realizes how much he liked commanding troops and conducting the business of war; he enjoyed combat duty in Vietnam. A thinking man's warrior who opens his book sections with quotes from the works of Carlos Castaneda, as a Special Forces professional Morris had strong opinions about the introduction of conventional units to Vietnam: "In 1964 the war had a nice 'Terry and the Pirates' ambience to it. Now it was full of psychotic commanders who thought they were refighting World War II with helicopters." He philosophizes about other men like himself: "I think perhaps Special Forces guys and other people like them have depressed metabolisms and they have to be exposed to some sort of danger to feel normal ... before going to Nam I didn't know that everyone wasn't paralyzed by boredom all the time."

Paralyzed with boredom is the last thing you'll be while reading *War Story*, a real standout amongst the burgeoning pile of popular literature on the Vietnam war. Compared to *War Story* most other first person accounts of combat duty in Vietnam appear as somewhat feeble attempts at war memoirs. Then, again, I doubt that many have been through six major rewrites over the course of eight years or have enjoyed publication in 16 editions.

Morris' prose is oftentimes humorous, always entertaining, and never boring, self-serving, or pedantic. A good example of his dry wit is how he describes his arrival at Ta Ko to take command of the Special Forces camp where "... the Strike Force had been for two years without going home or seeing a woman. Half of them had long hair and half of them had short hair and they were all real friendly with each other. But not with Americans. Every so often somebody threw a grenade into the team house." Obviously *War Story* is replete with a soldier's black humor regarding death and killing. One of the best lines in the book is: "I won't describe the operation because it was one of the most frustrating experiences of my military career, a

compendium of tactical errors and blown chances grotesque enough to break the heart of anybody who likes to kill people."

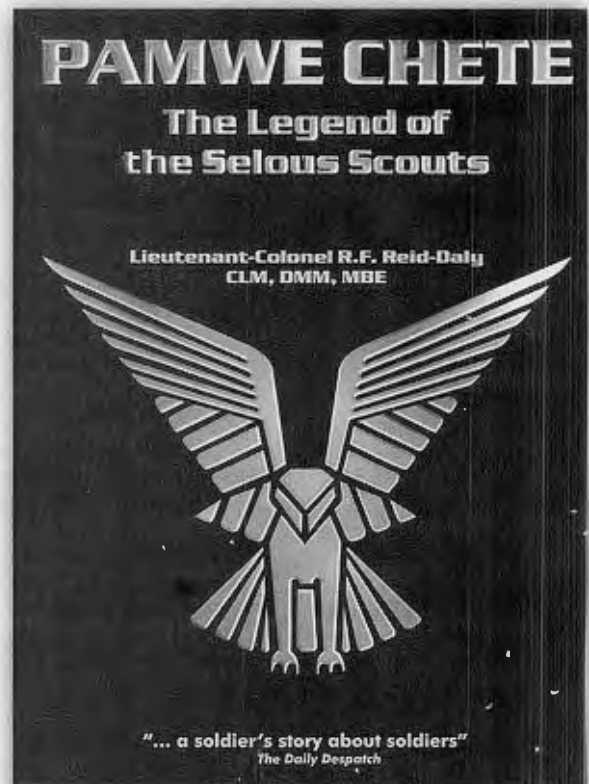
But Vietnam wasn't all fun and games for Jim Morris. The loss he suffered, besides his physical and emotional wounds, includes the deaths of comrades and close Army friends in the close and brutal combat which marked Special Forces operations in Vietnam. Special Forces was a close community and the death of a "Green Beret" meant a personal loss. He agonizes over the fate of, Phillipe Drouin, one of his Montagnard comrades and a leader of FULRO, the Montagnard independence movement, who was a kindred spirit and Morris' close friend. Despite the disparity of the two cultures Morris formed a deep and long lasting attachment to the Montagnards during his three tours in Vietnam and was well-connected to FULRO. While on an operation with the "Yards" at the end of his third tour, though suffering a life-threatening wound, he refused medical evacuation and proceeded to supervise the evacuation of his wounded Montagnards. His dedication to the Montagnard cause provided him with his paradigm for perfect happiness. "Get involved in something that is more important to you than your own life." In this regard Morris dedicates *War Story* "to anybody who ever died for something he believed in, whether he was right or not."

Special Forces' most ardent White House supporter, President John F. Kennedy, said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." Professional SF soldiers like Morris answered that call to duty and *War Story* gives us a glimpse of what our country asked of some of its young men and what they gave. For some it was too much. Others, like Morris, are still measuring the cost.

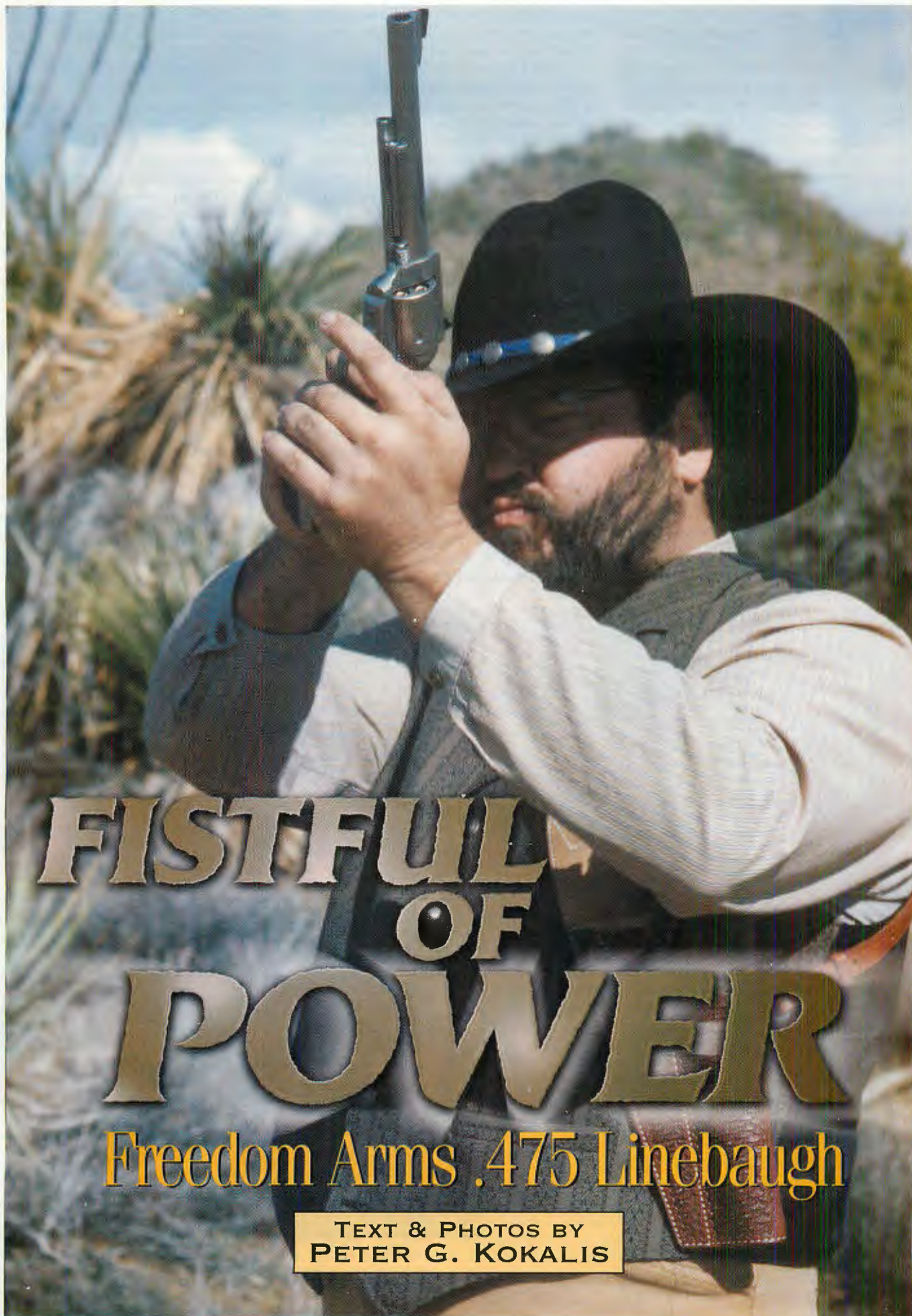
PAMWE CHETE

The Legend of the Selous Scouts

by Lt. Col. R.F. Reid-Daly, Published by Covos-Day Books, Box 6996, Weltevreden Park, Roodepoort 1715, South Africa 1997; distributed in the United States by BHB International, 108 East North First Street, Suite G, Seneca, South Carolina 29678; phone: 864-885-9444. Reviewed by Frank Hopkins.



Continued on page 94



FISTFUL OF POWER

Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh

TEXT & PHOTOS BY
PETER G. KOKALIS

Power, in all its forms, forever holds Americans in its fascinating spell. Whether it be wealth, authority, automobiles, boats, airplanes, motorcycles or firearms, we want the most and the biggest. When it comes to firearms, big bores and fast bullets have always held the greatest allure for us. In the area of handguns, a strong case can be built for bores of large diameter.

We don't need to counterfeit "one-shot stop" data to demonstrate what is required to maximize a handgun's limited potential with regard to wound ballistics on either human targets or game animals. Penetration is, without doubt, the most important single parameter. The bullet must penetrate deeply enough to crush, cut and break through the human body's or animal's vital structures and organs. Once we've obtained the required penetration, the bullet that makes the biggest hole will do the most damage. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to determine that that means we want a bullet in the largest caliber that can be controlled by the shooter. And, in addition, moderate velocities will usually

provide better performance. Bullets traveling at excessive speeds will invariably over-expand and thus under-penetrate.

John Linebaugh of Cody, Wyoming, makes custom wheel guns and, in the school of Elmer Keith and John (Pondoro) Taylor, believes in big bullets and that bullet weight and caliber are constants in external ballistics while velocity is a constantly diminishing variable. Without exact placement high velocity projectiles lack penetrating qualities. Big bullets, on the other hand, will penetrate fully from any angle. Linebaugh's .500-caliber cartridge was designed to respond to those parameters. The cartridge cases must be made from trimming .348 Winchester brass. In 1987, fearing this latter caliber would be dropped from the Winchester line (it wasn't), Linebaugh took .45-70 brass, cut it to 1.400 inches and expanded it to take .475 bullets.

The .475 Linebaugh moved from a strictly custom loading to readily available factory ammunition in 1998. Buffalo Bore Ammunition in Idaho was the first to produce factory ammunition in this caliber using brass made by Starline. At that time the rim diameter was reduced from 0.608-inch (that of the .45-70 case) to 0.540-inch to prevent rim overlap in revolver cylinders such as those in the Freedom Arms product line. In 1999 Speer introduced a jacketed Gold Dot softpoint .475

bullet intended specifically for the .475 Linebaugh. Subsequently, Hornady Manufacturing Company (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68802; phone: 800-338-3220; fax: 308-382-5761; website: www.hornady.com) introduced a 400-grain XTP (Extreme Terminal Performance) jacketed hollow point (JHP) bullet for this caliber. This bullet features a deep cannelure to permit the heavy crimp required in handgun cartridges of this type. Most recently Hornady began producing .475 Linebaugh factory ammunition, and as well had SAAMI develop specifications, dimensions and pressure limits for this round. The 400-grain XTP JHP bullet moves away from the muzzle at about 1,350 fps. At 50 yards it's traveling at approximately 1,220 fps and at 100 yards (the extreme useful limit for any handgun regardless of caliber) it's still moving out at 1,120 fps.

Equally important, in 1999 Freedom Arms, Inc. (Dept. SOF, 314 Hwy 239 - P.O. Box 150, Freedom, WY 83120; phone: 307-883-2468; fax: 307-883-2005; website: www.freedomarms.com) chambered their magnificent Model 83 single-action revolver for the .475 Linebaugh cartridge. Soldier Of Fortune was sent a Freedom Arms Model 83 in this caliber for test and evaluation a short time ago in "Field Grade," which features a bead-blasted, matte finish.

Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh revolver; no handgun is built to closer tolerances. The amount of hand fitting applied to this revolver, even in Field Grade version, is far beyond that of any current production series firearm.



Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh single-action revolver was designed for those who believe in big bullets and that the bullet that makes the biggest hole will do the most damage.



Hornady now produces .475 Linebaugh factory ammunition using their 400-grain XTP (Extreme Terminal Performance) jacketed hollow point (JHP) bullet, which leaves the muzzle at 1,350 fps. (left) The author's bevy of Freedom Arms single-action revolvers (from top to bottom): .475 Linebaugh with 7½-inch barrel; unusual United States Marshal Model with 3-inch barrel, both .454 Casull and .45 Colt cylinders, and separate cartridge case ejector; .454 Casull with 4¼-inch barrel; and .22 LR with 4¼-inch barrel.



We selected a 7.5-inch barrel as most appropriate for the mighty .475 Linebaugh. Freedom Arms' barrels are fabricated from #416 stainless crucible steel heat-treated to 35 C on the Rockwell scale. The groove diameter is .475-inch, nominal. To properly stabilize the heavy 350- to 400-grain bullets most effectively employed in this revolver, the six-groove bores have a right-hand twist with one turn in 18 inches. Other available barrel lengths are 4 3/4 inches and 6 inches.

Overall length of our test specimen was 13¾ inches. Its weight, empty, was 3 pounds, 3 ounces. That's a handful of steel and with good reason, as any significant increase in mass provides greater inertia to absorb recoil and reduce stress to the system's components. We found the Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh revolver significantly more pleasant to shoot than the .454 Casull. My impression of the .475 Linebaugh's recoil impulse is that it's more "spread out" and not as sharp as that generated by the .454 Casull round.

Under Pressure

Pressures for the Hornady .475 ammuni-

tion used in *SOF's* test and evaluation of the Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh revolver hover around 47,000 psi. SAAMI specifications for this caliber call for a maximum pressure of 50,000 psi. Few modern rifles exceed this. As a result, the Freedom Arms Model 83 unfluted cylinder has but five chambers with the web between chambers at 0.130-inch and 0.120-inch to the outer surface, nominal (both measurements taken from the front end of the cylinder). The massive cylinder measures 1.75 inches in diameter and 1.79 inches in overall length.

For added strength, the locking recesses into which the bolt fits when the hammer is at full-cock are located between the cham-

bers. Each cylinder is fitted and locked to the frame it is to be mated with before it is chambered. This type of line-boring results in almost perfect barrel-to-cylinder alignment as each chamber is fired. Chamber throats are tight and are held to a tolerance of only 0.0002-inch. Industry standards for cylinder-to-forcing-cone gap are 0.003- to 0.008-inch. Freedom Arms holds this dimension to a maximum of 0.003-inch on all of their revolvers except those chambered for the .22 LR rimfire cartridge. Both lateral and fore-and-aft cylinder play are virtually nonexistent on our test specimen.

As cylinder rotation is clockwise, an added benefit of a five-shot cylinder is that

an empty case moves directly from the top strap to the loading gate after re-cocking. If you then first lower the hammer to the hammer-down safety or half-cock positions, you can eject the empty case and reload without disturbing the revolver's rotation cycle.

Except for the barrel, sight blades and springs, all other components of the Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh revolver are fabricated from 17-4 PH (Precipitating Hardness) stainless steel. The grip frame and receiver, manufactured as mill-finished investment castings, are attached together with the traditional five screws, which should occasionally be checked for loosening.

The grip frame's configuration exhibits

Packing A Cannon

No one hand crafts better field-type shoulder rigs than El Paso Saddlery Co. (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 27194, El Paso, TX 79926; phone: 915-544-2233; fax: 915-544-2535; website: www.epsaddlery.com; catalog: \$5). Their catalog contains a staggering number of historic, traditional and modern holsters for sportsmen, hunters, military personnel, cowboy action shooters and, of course, mostly armed professionals. They still offer the famous M1942 military shoulder holster, a substantially improved and beefed-up version of the WW II M-7 designed for the Colt Government Model 1911A1 pistol. Designed principally for pilots and vehicle drivers, it's not a concealable shoulder rig. El Paso Saddlery sold a substantial number of these holsters during Desert Storm to helicopter pilots and tankers. It's available for a wide array of semiautomatic pistols and both double and single action revolvers. We ordered one for our Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh with its 7 1/2-inch barrel. It came with nickel hardware and pigskin lining. This design features a single adjustable shoulder strap and a snap-operated belt strap at the bottom to keep the holster from flopping around. Still a great shoulder rig for field use, the M1942 costs \$80 for barrel lengths from 5 1/2 inches to 8 3/8 inches. Pigskin lining costs \$15 extra, as does the attractive fish scale stamping we stipulated.

The process by which El Paso Saddlery holsters are handcrafted is both unique and fascinating. Holster patterns are cut with a "steel rule" die using a powerful hydraulic press called a "clicker." Looking very much like a kitchen "cookie cutter," the dies, with sharp edges on one side only, are made from El Paso Saddlery's patterns and to their specifications.

The sharp edges are removed by hand with an edging tool. After this, the edge surfaces are polished using a rough canvas cloth impregnated with saddle soap. Stamping is applied entirely by hand at El Paso Saddlery. Some holster makers use embossing plates for this and it inevitably produces uneven results, as natural leather is never completely homogeneous. The safety strap is installed next, together with its snap on the holster body. The pigskin lining is glued with leather contact

cement called "Barge." The lining is rolled over at the mouth and stitched in place. This is done to prevent the lining from separating during repeated reholstering. It's an El Paso Saddlery exclusive.

The leather pattern is then folded and the main seam-stitched. El Paso Saddlery uses Landis No. 3 harness Stitchers. They have

six of these famous machines, which have not been manufactured since prior to World War II. Made in St. Louis, Missouri, by the Landis Machine Company, they remain highly desirable pieces of equipment, as they are simply the best stitching machines ever designed for leatherwork. They pull the stitch tight and well below the surface of the leather to protect the thread from abrasion. After stitching, both ends of the thread are burned with a soldering gun to form a ball of melted nylon that will never pull through. Subsequently, the main seam is made smooth on a drum sander followed by the edging tool and polishing with the canvas cloth that has been impregnated with saddle soap.

First dampening the holster and then inserting an aluminum casting of the handgun for which the holster is being made achieves the all-important blocking process. Some holster makers use actual handguns, but this runs the risk of marring the inside of the holster. Furthermore, aluminum will not discolor the leather. The holster is allowed to dry naturally with the alu-



Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh revolver with El Paso Saddlery Co. M1942 shoulder holster ordered with pigskin lining and fish scale stamping.

minum replica in place.

After blocking, the holster is cleaned with oxalic acid, a mild acid that removes fingerprints and dirt. Oiling is done by hand with pure prime neatsfoot oil (not neatsfoot oil "compound" which contains a substantial amount of petroleum byproducts). Neatsfoot oil is an animal product that comes from the hooves of cattle. Only a small amount is applied with each coat. As many as 10 to 12 coats are required. Subsequent to oiling, the holster is given a coat of Feibing's Harness Dressing. This non-acrylic leather dressing protects, waterproofs and provides a slight sheen. If it has a safety strap, the snap is installed. There is a final inspection for fit before the holster goes to shipping. All of El Paso Saddlery's holsters are handcrafted in this manner.

excellent human engineering and yet retains the classic appearance of an early Colt percussion revolver. We chose the optional, resin-impregnated Winewood (a wood laminate) smooth grip panels for our test and evaluation as they permit the revolver to roll upward during recoil. Any attempt to over-control the .475 Linebaugh's recoil and muzzle whip would be foolish and counterproductive.

This is a single-action revolver and the hammer must be manually pulled back to full cock before a shot is fired. Freedom Arms revolvers are normally equipped with 4- to 5-pound trigger pull weights. We specified the optional honed action with a trigger stop, and our test revolver was sent to us with a clean-breaking, crisp trigger pull weight of only 3 pounds.

There are for hammer positions, including full-cock. After firing, the hammer will be all the way forward against the striker plate. The revolver should not be carried loaded in this position even though there is a unique sliding bar safety system. This safety mechanism is significantly different from the transfer bar safety found on the Freedom Arms Model 97 revolvers (about 10% smaller in size and chambered for cartridges such as the .41 magnum and .357 Magnum).

Sliding Bar Safety

Finally, the hammer can be placed approximately halfway back to the half-cock position. This depresses the cylinder locking bolt into the frame, leaving the cylinder free to rotate for loading and

unloading the chambers. Due to spring tension on the cylinder hand, you will feel a resistance to rotating the cylinder and will hear another audible click as the hand drops into each ratchet notch. To rotate the cylinder, the hammer must be brought to half-cock from the fully forward position or the cylinder lock lever will not release the cylinder. To load or unload from half-cock, the loading gate must be swung outward. To unload, push back on the spring-loaded

inspection, first place the hammer in the half-cock position with the cylinder free to rotate. Open the loading gate and make sure the chambers are empty. Remove the screw on the side of the cylinder axis pin which prevents the axis pin from jumping forward during recoil. Slide the axis pin toward the muzzle until it touches the ejector tab. Remove the cylinder from the loading gate side of the revolver with a rolling clockwise motion, being careful not to scratch or dam-

This is one robust, mean mother, chambered for a cartridge that will challenge the shooter to the maximum extent with every pull of the trigger.

ejector rod to remove the cartridges or empty cases. Never press the trigger while the hammer is in the half-cock position as this can damage the trigger mechanism.

The revolver should never be fired without a loaded cartridge or empty case under the loading gate as this prevents the possibility of high pressure gases from passing through an empty chamber and opening the loading gate. In addition, it should never be dry-fired without an empty case in the chamber to prevent damage to the gas-proofing firing pin. In addition, read the manual carefully.

To remove the cylinder for cleaning or

age the cylinder. To reinstall the cylinder, use the reverse procedure, making sure the hammer is in the half-cock position and that you have lubricated the cylinder axis pin in addition to other components.

Both the front and rear sights are black-oxide finished to minimize glare. Both fixed and adjustable rear sights are available. When it is anticipated that bullets of varying weights and velocities will be employed, the adjustable rear sight should be chosen. Thankfully, there are no useless white outlines or colored inserts on either the front or rear sights. The serrated, ramp-type front sight blade is 0.125-inch thick with a 1/4-inch vertical step at the rear end. Although not designed for this purpose, the vertical step can be used to compensate for bullet drop at extremely long ranges. The allen-head set screw retaining the front sight blade to its base should be checked periodically for looseness. The rear sight, with a 0.125-inch open square-notch can be adjusted for both elevation and windage by means of a small screwdriver. The rear sight's edges are quite sharp and will slash a leather holster flap or your hands to shreds. Dehorning this component should be a standard factory feature.

Overall, the quality of manufacture is superb. No handgun is built to closer tolerances. The amount of hand-fitting applied to this revolver, even in the Field Grade-version, is far beyond that of any current production series firearm. And yet, this is one robust, mean mother, chambered for a cartridge that will challenge the shooter to the maximum extent with every pull of the trigger. Without doubt the Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh single-action revolver will find its greatest appeal among hunters, including those who track dangerous game. However, there are a substantial number of pistoleros who enjoy shooting powerful handguns at nothing more than steel plates and paper bullseyes and this superbly crafted piece of machinery will attract them, as well. Such quality has its price and the Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh single-action revolver as *SOF* tested it costs \$1,723.75. ❧

Freedom Arms .475 Linebaugh

SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber: .475 Linebaugh.

Operation: Five-shot single-action revolver. Sliding bar safety system, when engaged, blocks hammer until the trigger is deliberately squeezed and held rearward.

Construction materials: Except for the barrel, sight blades and springs, all other components are fabricated from 17-4 PH (Precipitating hardness) stainless steel. Freedom Arms' barrels are fabricated from #416 stainless crucible steel heat-treated to 35C on the Rockwell scale.

Weight, empty: 3 pounds, 3 ounces.

Barrel: Six-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 18 inches.

Barrel lengths: 4½, 6 and 7½ inches.

Length, overall: 13¾ inches (with 7½-inch barrel).

Grip panels: Smooth, resin-impregnated Winewood (a wood laminate).

Sights: Serrated, ramp-type front sight blade is 0.125-inch thick with a 1/4-inch vertical step at the rear end. The rear sight, with a 0.125-inch open square-notch can be adjusted for both elevation and windage.

Finish: Field grade features a bead-blasted, matte finish.

Price: \$1,723.75, as tested.

Manufacturer: Freedom Arms, Inc. Dept. SOF, 314 Hwy 239 - P.O. Box 150, Freedom, WY 83120; phone: 307-883-2468; fax: 307-883-2005; website www.freedomarms.com.

Ammunition: Hornady Manufacturing Company, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68802; phone: 800-338-3220; fax: 308-382-5761; website: www.hornady.com.

Leather: El Paso Saddlery Co., Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 27194, El Paso, TX 79926; phone: 915-544-2233; fax: 915-544-2535; website: www.epsaddlery.com.

T&E summary: Manufactured to closest practical tolerances. Highest level of craftsmanship available in a production series handgun. Accurate, but with stout recoil. Effective wound ballistics performance now available with factory ammunition. Principal applications: hunters and those who enjoy shooting powerful handguns at nothing more than steel plates and paper bullseyes.



Al J. Venter

Bloody Biafra

The Country That Was Not To Be

BY AL J. VENTER



Low-Flying Idealism

As “fighters” go, the “Minicons” that hit us were small. “Von Rosen’s Vengeance” the little prop-driven “fighters” were called. Fitted with underwing rocket pods in France and secretly shipped to the West African, oil-rich state of Gabon at the height of the Biafran war, the Swedish MF-19Bs packed a decisive punch that steamy November morning in 1969. Count Gustaf von Rosen — a swashbuckling Swedish philanthropist with delusions of “changing Africa” — had clandestinely bought six of them and with a group of volunteers had flown them from Europe to Biafra. Had he not waited until the last months of the war, the converted trainers might have had more success because there were times when the Biafran War seesawed haphazardly. At one stage, having taken Benin, the Biafran army was headed straight for Lagos, Nigeria. Then some bright spark halted all this forward

momentum and the Nigerian Army was able to regroup.

In a sense, the single common denominator in this bloodletting was similar to what we see in Israel today: Both sides hated each other with a religious-driven fury that defied description. Consequently, foreign ships — like my own and the American-flag Farrell Line steamer *African Crescent*, which was lying at moorings in Warri ahead of us — were

among the first of the Mincom victims.

Having used their 68mm SNEB underwing rockets against us at Warri, the Minicons pulled away and banked towards hidden airstrips and concrete bunkers deep in the West African jungle. By then both merchant were ships burning, with one or two dead and seven wounded on the American freighter. The *Titania*, in contrast, had come off lightly: The only people hurt were a stewardess and our first mate, Henry Ingbretsen, and their wounds were superficial. The bump on my head didn’t count. Obviously, it could have been much worse.

Taking photos afterwards, we were awed by a huge column of smoke rising thousands of feet into the sky to the southeast. Later we heard that oil-storage tanks in the estuary had been blasted.

I tried to file the story to the *London Daily Express*. Having written my piece I went ashore on the ship’s boat. And while the post office in town accepted my Express Cable and Wireless media card without comment, my report never left the country. Nigeria’s censors — all military — had ordered a blanket ban on any news of Biafran air activity. Officially the Minicons didn’t exist.

SOF Contributing Editor for Africa Al Venter reckons he’s probably the only journalist to have been rocketed by the aircraft of both sides in West Africa’s Biafra War. The first time it was rebel Swedish-built MFI-9B “Minicons” which hit the merchant ship that he was on. Later — once inside the rebel territory — he came under fire from Nigerian Air Force MiG-17s flown by South African mercs ...

was in my cabin onboard when the first salvo struck: Two powerful blasts in quick succession that seemed to reverberate through my body. Only afterwards were we able to see where rockets had penetrated the hull. With firing going on, I wasn’t going to hang about below deck and my first impulse was to get up top and see where it was all coming from.

Three steps at a time, I shot up the companionway and emerged on deck in time to see two small planes turning low on the water. They were heading back towards us, about a quarter-mile away. I had barely focused when I spotted two quick spurts of smoke from their underwing rocket pods: More rockets were incoming.

Nobody stops to think when he has no options. Without thinking about it, I dived headlong down the same set of stairs that I’d used moments earlier. A microsecond later one of the rockets exploded barely feet from me. The other projectile hit us amidstships, somewhere above the waterline. We weren’t to know that until later, either.

What was clear to all of us onboard the *Titania*, lying at moorings at the Nigerian delta port of Warri, was that somehow, our

neutral Norwegian-flag merchant ship had become embroiled in Nigeria’s civil war. That in itself was serious because, even then, this volatile West African state had become dangerously dysfunctional.

Still, I wasn’t to know it immediately, but the simple act of throwing myself headlong down the companionway stairs — an action dictated more by panic than common sense — had a few fortuitous consequences. Two of the ship’s crew — both women — were on their way up while I was plunging down and I landed on top of both them. The effect knocked us sprawling in a heap at the bottom just as the second rocket detonated in a linen cupboard above our heads. A year’s supply of sheets, blankets and towels absorbed the brunt of the blast.

I heard years later that I had been commended for “bravery” for my “thoughtful and selfless actions.” I wasn’t going to disillusion anybody.



courtesy Mike Draper

(above) The remains of one of the freighters that crashed at Uli Airport: All crew members were killed. Mock anti-aircraft exercises (below) during a training routine in the jungle: Such squaddie weapons had no effect against Nigerian MiG-17s and Czech Delphin fighters. (opposite) Oil storage tanks on the outskirts of Warri, set afire by rebel Biafran Minicons, supplied by an idealistic Swedish count, flown by mercs. It’s Africa. (opposite, inset) Biafran hospital, bombed by mercs flying MiG-17s for Federal Nigeria.



Al J. Venter



I'd originally boarded *Titania* in Ghana's Tema harbor in a bid to avoid having to transit Nigeria to get to the Cameroons. My ultimate destination was Libreville, Gabon, from where I intended to board one of the air freighters taking in relief supplies into the rebel break-away state of Biafra, formerly Eastern Nigeria. Having lived in Nigeria for almost a year before that, I was aware that to try to move through that country in wartime was dodgy: A white "colonial" former resident of Lagos with strong South African connections carried too much political baggage.

Guilt By Association

Biafra had recruited South African mercs and press card or not, I could easily be mistaken for one. I decided instead that a ship was the only way of getting past Nigeria, but *Titania's* crew never told me that they would be calling in at Warri.

Getting into Biafra from Gabon wasn't easy, either. The French were committed to keeping the Biafran war machine alive. They vetted anybody wanting to go in and I was no exception. It took days of persuasion to get a flight. Eventually with the help of one of the South African pilots involved in relief work, I got on to a flight into Uli — at one stage West Africa's busiest airport.

It's worth remembering that one of the most striking introductions to any article about the Biafran war began: "It was only a jungle airstrip in the heart of tropical West Africa, but Uli Airport — codename Annabelle — became a legend among the airline pilots of the world."

Like most things, everything that went on at Uli was improvised: The runway — lined on both sides by primeval jungle — had once been a stretch of main road between Aba and Onitcha in Eastern Nigeria. When the runway fuses blew, which happened nightly, they used strings of cans of palm oil with lighted wicks floating on top. It was typically West African Heath Robinson, especially when the wind blew. But it worked.

Frederick Forsyth said it best in his introduction to one of the best books to come out of the war, Mike Draper's *Shadows: Airlift and Airwar in Biafra and Nigeria*. "It was crazy, it was hairy, it was impossibly dangerous; it should never have worked. But somehow it did, night after night. When the planes landed and taxied into the welcome darkness by the side of the motorway-turned-landing-strip, willing hands hauled sacks of milk powder and bundles of stockfish out of the fuselages and away into the feeding centers. That done, the pilots taxied back to the take-off point, the lights flickered on for a few seconds and they were gone ..."

Forsyth recalls that this was the story of the strangest air-bridge the world has ever seen. The airplanes used by the aid people were a ramshackle collection of time-expired or phased out workhorses of the skies, culled from boneyards all over the globe. Had it not happened, he reckoned there would have been another million Biafran children starved into oblivion because the rebel state was blockaded by land, sea and air.

Foreign Intrigue

For their part, the Nigerians were just as active. Apart from shooting down an International Red Cross DC-7B relief plane loaded with baby food, the mercs flew hundreds of MiG-17 missions for the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) against Biafran ground targets. Interestingly, Moscow sold the MiGs to Nigeria with the proviso that no Western pilots were to get near them, though the vicissitudes of war quickly changed that. An RAF-trained South African merc pilot Ares Klootwyk became the first Westerner to take a Russian MiG-17 into combat.

Obviously, London was interested in what Russian jets could (and could not) do, so there were British and American spooks all over the place along the various fronts for the duration of the war. At the end of it, Klootwyk had spent more than 200 hours flying sorties in MiG-17s in 189 combat missions. More merc pilots, such as Britons Paul Martin and Mike Thompsett (who flew his MiG into

One of the lasting images of a tragic African war: And judging by recent events in Africa's most populous nation, it's going to happen again! If there's oil involved, some will get fat — and some will starve.

the ground shortly after the downing of the Red Cross freighter) were just as active.

Other freebooters came from Australia and several European countries, all recruited through a single company in Switzerland. Egyptian mercenaries in contrast, who flew NAF Ilyushin IL-28s were notable for their inability to achieve anything spectacular. They would rarely drop below 10,000 feet for fear of ground fire which, at best, was pretty marginal because there was so little of it being airlifted into the country.

For much of the war, Uli remained the tenuous lifeline between Biafra and the world outside in this grim, internecine war. The "miracle of Uli" as the hacks referred to it, hosted about 20 — though sometimes as few as five or as many as 40 aircraft — often loaded well beyond safety limits with tons of food and weapons and ammunition — that ran the Federal blockade. Some were hit while taxiing, others were bombed by the NAF "Intruder" an antiquated C-47 Gooney Bird that had been adapted to carry the 50- and 100-pound canisters of explosives. Later the Nigerians bought some surplus U.S. B-25s.

Several of the planes were also accidentally shot down by Biafran groundfire, though the rebels denied it. They said it couldn't happen. But it did: We were nearly hit by heavy machine-gun fire from the ground as we came in, and it wasn't Nigerian fire coming up at us because their lines were miles away.

Look at the figures. In church relief flights alone (never mind the arms runs which were a sizable tally each night) there were 7,350 freight flights into Biafra in the three years that war ravaged eastern Nigeria. In this time almost a million tons of supplies, including arms, were taken into the beleaguered territory.

In Unmarked Graves

During the course of the operation there were 15 aircraft lost and 25-air crew killed, all buried at a small cemetery adjacent to



Al J. Venter



Al J. Venter



(top) Biafran troops in training, with a mixed bag of weapons, mostly No. 4 Enfields and Kar98k Mausers from WWII.

(above) Bayonet practice by starving troops: They had little effect against the well-armed, adequately fed Nigerian Army.

(left) Original batch of five MFI-9B "Minicons" which were flown into Biafra by their volunteer crews of two British, two Biafran pilots and Count Gustav von Rosen (center). They were fitted with underwing SNEB 68mm rocket mounts on French soil.

courtesy Mike Draper



(above) One of the Biafran B-26R bombers (which never carried any Biafran identity). One of these planes was used to bomb Lagos, but crashed in the effort. (below) Nigerian Air Force Czech-built Delphin jet fighter, used in airstrikes against Biafran ground forces.



(below) Ex-RAF merc pilot Paul Martin stands by his Nigerian Air Force MiG-17 at Port Harcourt. Sovs had provided the MiGs with the proviso no Westerners would get close!



Uli Airport. Their graves were bulldozed by the Nigerian army when it was over so that, as one cocky Nigerian field commander declared to a gathering of foreign correspondents, "they'll be eternally forgotten ... we don't want their families poking about here for their remains afterwards."

Getting to Uli was an event. Suddenly, on day six or seven, the Biafran representative in Libreville told me: "You're going in tonight," he said. "Make sure you're at the airport by three this afternoon and bring along something warm to wear. It gets cold in the air."

My pilot was a German. "Herman the German," we called him, a laconic individual with severe halitosis and who was much given to brandy — good or bad. Word had it that he drank day and night. When he reported for duty that afternoon he'd obviously already had plenty. I couldn't object: Herman was my passport to an unusual war.

It was essential to listen very carefully to whatever Herman had to tell you. His English sounded like a send-up of some of those films on Hitler's that the British were so adept at making in the fifties. For instance, it took a while to work out that "Zem" was "them," especially when he slurred, which was often.

"Zey are waiting for us," he explained, "Und ven ve cross de coast [of Nigeria] den plenty uv *bam-bam*." The idea of being shot at apparently amused him. It was rumored that he had flown supplies into trapped divisions at Stalingrad.

Once on board, there were no formalities and I had no intercom to talk to the pilots up front. My place was at the back, a single seat immediately ahead of the tail and a toilet that hadn't been cleaned in months. From where I sat, the cockpit felt a thousand miles away. To cap it all, there was a mountain of baby food between them and me.

Herman, of course, was right. The Nigerians were waiting for us. As soon as

we crossed the coastline somewhere near Port Harcourt, I spotted flashes of artillery fire on the ground that quickly became brilliant orange balls of flak as they exploded a few thousand feet below us. I watched the panoply through the porthole nearest me, transfixed by the sheer terror of it. It was a bit like being at the movies.

More Intrigue ... Thankfully

Only after the war did it emerge that the nightly shuttle of aircraft from Libreville and the Portuguese island of Sao Tome was part of giant charade — a chess game of sorts that the Super Powers tended to indulge in from time to time. Nigerian anti-aircraft guns and their crews were Russian and somehow, those who made these nightly flights into Biafra were aware that their fuses had been set at 14,000 feet. Meanwhile, we crossed the coast at 18,000 feet. I suppose, they could have shot us down any time they chose.

Curiously, the Nigerian high command never protested, although one would have thought that they might have. After all, Lagos was picking up a pretty hefty tab for all this "gratuitous military aid" from the Soviets.

Herman told me before lift-off that our approach to Uli Airport would be made in the dark, not that it made much difference. What was different was that almost all of Africa was clothed in a brilliant, almost incandescent glow from a moon that was almost full.

Once we crossed the coast, there wasn't a light to be seen anywhere on the ground, apart from some heavy calibers shooting at us from what I worked out were the front lines of the war. What compounded matters, I soon discovered, was that none of the aircraft approaching Uli used navigation lights, even though there were sometimes eight or 10 aircraft stacked above and below us. Getting on to the ground at Uli was a mammoth nightly operation that seemed to work but, considering the impediments, shouldn't have.

There was a joke among relief crews: that if they were all to switch on their lights while circling Uli simultaneously, half the pilots would have died of heart attack. They were flying that dangerously close to each other.

The actual landing process too, was dicey. With time, a succession of routines was developed with the result that our descent was ultra-steep. Pilots would maneuver their aircraft into position before sets of improvised runway lights were switched on for about five or six seconds. That was all the time they had to get their bearings. Meanwhile, Herman was talking with ground control.

Though the world was black outside, most of the pilots would have some idea of where they were while circling because landing lights that flashed irregularly before touchdown. Once into short finals, another few seconds of lights were allowed and that

Continued on page 83

The Biafran War: What Was It All About?

On independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria was divided into three distinct regions: The two in the south were largely Christian/animist and the north, bigger and more populous than the other two together. The Muslim heart of the upper half was centered on the ancient trading city of Kano. It also had control of Nigeria's government and its army and therein lay the seeds of a bitter, bloody internecine war that was to last three years and take a million lives, most of them civilian.

What happened was that in 1966, a group of young Eastern (Christian) officers launched a military *coup d'état* against the central government in Lagos which, in their wisdom, they believed was being run by zealots. Almost as afterthought, they murdered some of the most respected northern political/religious leaders. In the time-honoured tradition of Islam, this act demanded more than a riposte.

Seven months later, a group of northern army officers, most of them sons of the Prophet, struck back with a counter coup. They ousted the Ibo leader General Ironsi who had taken over government. With that act they set off a pogrom that resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of Easterners who had settled in the north, some of them generations ago.

Multitudes of Ibos fled back to the protection of their self-appointed leader, Lieutenant Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu. Already the Eastern Region was referring to itself as Biafra. At the same time, confident that the vast oil resources of his region could support him, Ojukwu refused to accept the military authority of Lagos. If the violence against his people continued, he warned, he would go it alone and Biafra would secede from the Nigerian Federation.

This was the last thing that Britain and the U.S. needed at the height of the Cold War. Vietnam was still a factor and if Nigeria were to fragment, the domino effect would be Africa as well. They were also alarmed because overnight, their oil investments were being threatened by a young army upstart that nobody had ever heard of before.

Acknowledging they were powerless to stop a situation, which — because of the slaughter of the innocents — was being termed "barbarous" by the international media, Biafra declared itself independent soon afterwards. By this time Ojukwu had secretly launched a massive build-up of arms involving people like the American arms dealer Hank Warton and Rhodesia's illustrious Jack Malloch. Both men, together with arms merchants from France, Holland, Germany and China worked hand-in-glove with several European governments including France, Portugal and Spain.

South Africa, too, eventually got sucked into this morass with special forces Colonel Jan Breytenbach and several others involved in Biafran operations, training and tactical issues. It suited Pretoria's Apartheid regime to cause as much dissension in Africa as possible and take the focus of attention off their own troubles back home. It was all part of South Africa's program of destabilisation.

In the end, there were mercenaries from a variety of nations in Biafra. For several reasons, which included isolation, lack of communications, an extremely harsh tropical climate in an area that us hacks had dubbed "the armpit of Africa," these "dogs of war" had curiously little impact on the eventual outcome of the war.

They very quickly ran up against an entrenched level of bias from Biafra's officer corps who believed that they could do better than a rag-tag bunch of hired guns. The fact that almost all of the mercs were white didn't help either.

Hostilities ended abruptly early 1970 after the Biafran people had been starved into submission. By then a million easterners had died. It is notable that the slaughter of Ibos — expected after Federal forces had overrun the rebel territory — never happened.

Today, at the start of the new Millennium, history seems to be repeating itself in Africa's most populous nation.

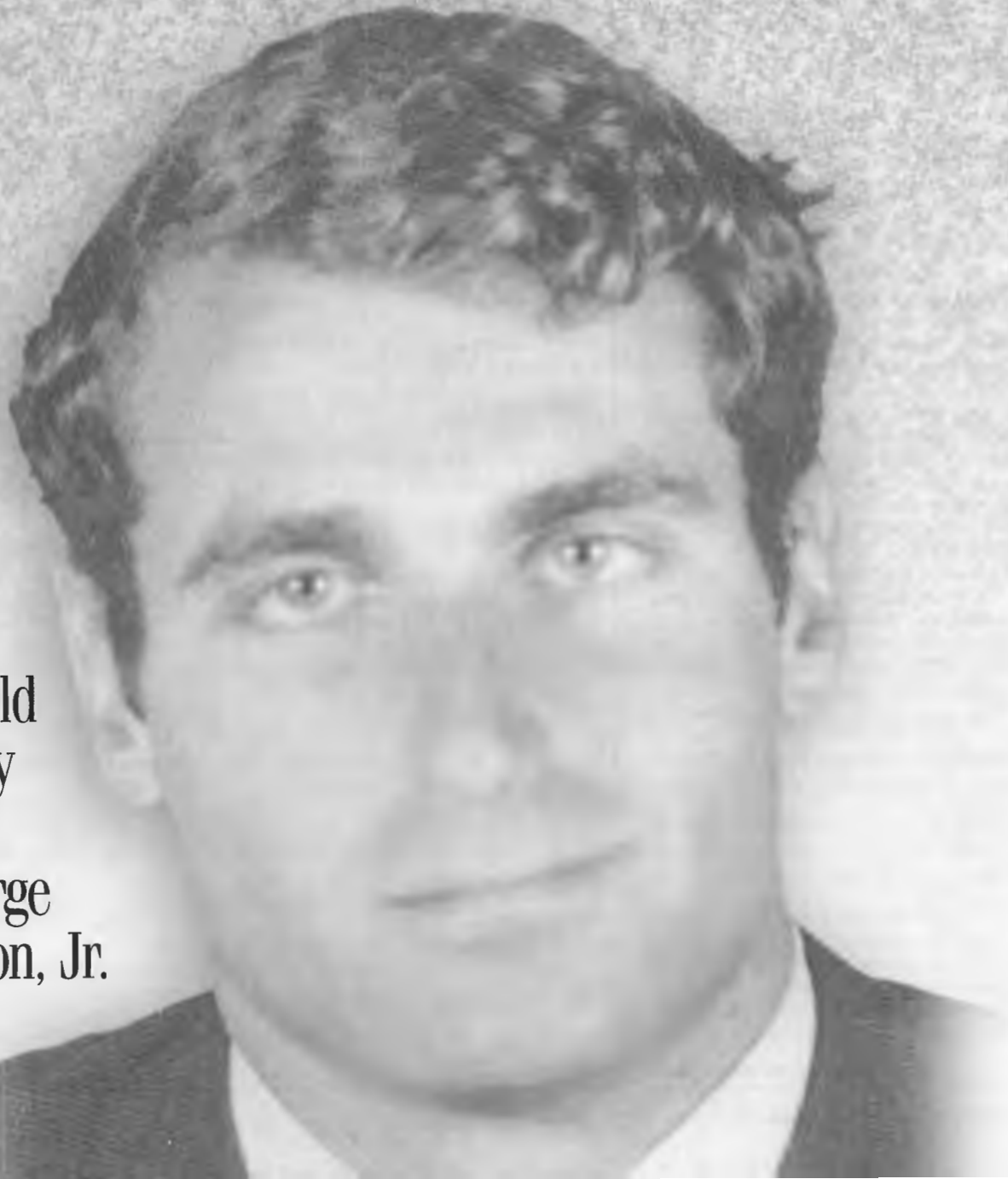
— A.J.V.



What was the Biafran war all about?
This Biafran poster says it all!

KAYAK'S FINAL JOURNEY

The
Untold
Story
of
George
Bacon, Jr.



"Never leave a comrade's body in the field — even if it takes 25 years to recover."

Two former spies — one American, one Cuban — unite to recover an ex-CIA agent killed in Angola a quarter-century ago.

by Commander Chip Beck, USNA (Ret.)

Mercenary, Spy Or Idealist?

George Bacon Jr., a.k.a. "Kayak," died violently. His fate did not surprise those who served with him in Indochina. What might have surprised them, is that after 25 years of being abandoned by the country from which he hailed, Bacon's body is being sought for a humanitarian return by the country whose soldiers killed him. (See Part II in next month's *SOF*.)

Elsewhere in the northern coastal region of Angola, three other foreigners lay dead, all killed within days of entering from neighboring Zaire, in a futile attempt to bolster the routed forces of Holden Roberto's National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA).

The 13 survivors were put on trial in Luanda by FNLA's rival Angolan power, the Marxist Party for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and charged with being mercenaries and various war crimes. All 13 were convicted. Two were sentenced to death and executed.

American Gary Acker told the International Red Cross he saw Bacon die, but knew not what happened to his corpse after it was loaded on a flatbed truck. That was the only official confirmation of death Bacon's parents ever received.

During 25 years, neither the State Department nor the CIA tried to locate Bacon's burial site or retrieve his remains. In Massachusetts, Kayak's parents, George, Sr. and Geraldine Bacon, waited decades in anguish for their son to come home.

George Bacon, awarded the CIA's Intelligence Star for bravery in Laos, was buried not far from where he fell in battle ... and forgotten.

After Bacon's death, the press speculated that the ex-paramilitary officer was on a clandestine assignment for his old employers when

Cuimba, Angola, 13 February 1976: The Land Rover with its lethal cargo of British-American mercenaries sped south as fast as the narrow Portuguese-built road allowed. Rounding a bend, it encountered a nightmare: A Cuban Expeditionary Force, moving north on both sides of the asphalt ribbon.

The African driver stomped the brakes, skidding to a halt in the middle of the patrol. The mercenaries were surrounded by Cubans, initially surprising both parties. Facing automatic weapons, the driver raised his hands in surrender.

In the most vital encounter of their short-lived operation, the armed men in the truck were as useless as empty ammo clips. Cramped inside an enclosed passenger cabin with no room to move, they could not use their M16s and FALs. They were gift-wrapped prisoners, ready for delivery.

One American, "Kayak," was perched on the tailgate when the Rover careened to its stop. A genuine combat veteran among amateurs, he instinctively sprang from the truck with his weapon, trying to escape. He died within seconds, shot by a quick-acting Cuban soldier. A second mercenary was wounded. The others surrendered, choosing dishonor over death.

Ten hours before Valentine's Day 1976, in a land full of war but little love, 13 European and American mercenaries were captured by a Cuban army patrol in northern Angola, faraway from Havana, Washington, London or Moscow. The 14th man, Kayak, considered himself an adventurer and freedom fighter, not a hired gun. He was a correspondent for *Soldier Of Fortune* magazine, and an ex-CIA paramilitary officer.



"Kayak" with H'mong leader, General Vang Pao, and guerrilla forces near Plain of Jars in Laos, ca. 1972. Forces were engaged in tying up North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces in Laos. (Inset) Author Chip Beck in 1972, then a paramilitary advisor in northern Laos. Photograph was taken by Bill Buckley, who was later kidnapped and killed in Beirut, Lebanon where he and Beck served together a decade later.

courtesy George Bacon, Sr./Political Graphics

courtesy author

he died. Several print and TV news outlets learned about Bacon's relatively brief CIA career, and set about investigating his status.

CIA spokesmen denied Bacon was working for the Agency, but the press viewed the denials suspiciously. True or false, journalists assumed the CIA would disavow Bacon. Disclaimers were part of what Rudyard Kipling called "The Great Game," where intelligence rules mandated "plausible denials."

Formal, private assurances that Bacon was not a CIA officer went to Congress, which also reacted with skepticism. In 1976, before Bacon died, a Senate oversight committee headed by Frank Church had ordered the CIA to terminate all covert operations in Angola involving Agency personnel inside the country. Church wanted to make sure his orders were not disobeyed by some scheme involving Bacon and a band of mercenaries.

Was Bacon a covert operative on a dangerous mission in Africa, or a freelance mercenary like his comrades on trial?

For the first time, an insider answers whether or not Bacon was a non-official cover CIA operative. The account is told by myself, Navy Commander Chip Beck, a retired CIA SOG veteran who served with Bacon in Laos, preceded him to Angola, talked to his adversaries in Cuba, and knows many answers to the 25-year old mystery.

The Super Bowl Warning

"If you go to Angola with this group of clowns, you won't last 72 hours. Bufkin's a liar, FNLA is incompetent, and 23,000 Cubans are rolling up the landscape where you are headed."

That was my warning to George Bacon, Jr., on Super Bowl Sunday, 1976, as I tried to talk him out of his plan to "fight communism" in Africa. Three weeks later, he died on his third day inside northern Angola, as I predicted.

My prophecy was based on mission experience which I was not at liberty to divulge to my former CIA paramilitary colleague. Unknown to him, I had already spent 100 days deep inside war-torn Angola and survived. I was one of the men Senator Church forced to leave. Had Congress not taken its action, I and a couple of colleagues would have remained in Angola, and the presence of Bufkin's amateurs unnecessary.

During our Super Bowl conversation, I learned Kayak traveled in November 1975 to Lusaka, hoping to join Jonas Savimbi and UNITA. At the time he visited the UNITA "guest house," provided by Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, I was on the premises, having just exited Angola with Savimbi and his Foreign Affairs Minister, Jorge Sangumba. Savimbi told me that two foreigners were offering their services, but they were going to be turned away. UNITA kept me hidden to protect my presence and identity. It was not until Kayak and I compared notes in January that we realized the two of us were in the house at the same time.

When I learned that Kayak died disregarding my advice and warning — which CIA's Deputy Africa Division Chief authorized me to provide him — I felt no satisfaction at being right. I felt sadness that such a young, promising life ended before the age of 30, along with twinges of anger that he had not listened.

As a friend, I went out of my way to help Kayak, providing him detailed information about the charlatan mercenary, David Bufkin, who was a liar and a fool. Kayak disregarded sound advice that could have kept him alive and out of harm's way. Unfortunately, it was the battle he sought, not the advice.

A Swashbuckling "Errol Flynn"

That attitude was typical Kayak, exuding invincibility. Physically, he resembled young Errol Flynn. Perhaps in subconscious keeping with Flynn's silver screen image, Kayak manifested his own swashbuckling air. The trait endeared him to Lao soldiers he advised during the "Secret War." It also annoyed the hell out of his SOG buddies at Long Tieng.

"I loved the hell out of Kayak, but some things he'd do drove you nuts," recalls Mike Ingham, a former PM Case Officer nicknamed "Hardnose."

In January 1976, as I dismantled the Angola Task Force (ATF) with John Stockwell (who resigned from CIA that year, protesting a variety of issues), Langley headquarters learned that a "George Bacon" was among "freedom fighters" headed for Angola. From newspapers, CIA knew American mercenaries were being recruited, but that was the first time we heard "our George" was involved.

CIA's fears were confirmed. Kayak and



courtesy author

(above) Chip Beck and Cuban Interest Section Press Attaché, Luis Fernandez, at an event at the National Press Club, in Washington, D. C. Mr. Fernandez was the first Cuban official Beck contacted in his effort to visit Cuba in search of information on George Bacon in Angola and American POWs in Vietnam. (below) During the opening of the First International War Correspondents Convention (*Encuentro de correspondientes de guerra*) at the International Press Center, Beck (center) shared an opening panel not as a former intelligence officer (which he can openly admit under terms of his retirement), but as a professional Combat Artist and writer. (far left) Raul Valdez Vivos, who was Cuba's "Ambassador in the Jungle" to the revolutionary forces of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. In that capacity and as a war journalist, Valdez interviewed American POWs held by the Viet Cong in Tay Ninh Province, South Vietnam, in 1965. After the war in Indochina was over, Valdez, like Beck, ended up in Angola, where he interviewed the surviving 13 mercenaries who were put on trial after Bacon was KIA by the Cuban patrol. To Beck's immediate left is Hugo Ruiz, President of the Cuban Journalist and Editor's Union (UPEC), who served in northern Angola at the time George Bacon was killed and who provided Beck with additional leads that his colleagues and government officials helped to further track down.



courtesy Jose Martí Press Institute

other Americans, including Daniel Gearhart and Gary Acker, were recruited by a charlatan known as David Bufkin. U.S. Army and FBI reports detailed his criminal background and considered him a pathological liar.

While recruiting the soldiers of fortune, Bufkin, by then a crop-dust pilot, portrayed himself as a combat veteran of the Korean and Vietnam Wars. In truth, he never set foot in either country, as a combatant or any other capacity. He was a clerk and a cook in the U.S. Army in the 1950s, dishonorably discharged at least three times for re-enlisting under aliases. Bufkin was the classic American “wannabee.”

News that Bacon joined Bufkin came routinely through a list of visa applicants supplied to the State Department by the Zairian Embassy. It was a *pro forma* consular check by the Zairian visa section, and the names were passed to CIA via routine liaison channels. Since George Bacon only resigned from the CIA the summer before, his name flashed like a neon light to the Deputy Division Chief of Africa, a kindly man named Cliff Strathern (later CIA Comptroller, now deceased).

Strathern was Deputy Station Chief in Vientiane, Laos, during the final years of the “secret war” when both Bacon and I served upcountry as paramilitary officers. Knowing I was a friend of Kayak’s, and because I was working on the ATF, Strathern asked me to locate Bacon, contact him, and determine if he planned to undertake what appeared to be a mercenary venture.

If true, Strathern told me to talk Kayak out of going. I was permitted to disclose Bufkin’s criminal background and the “tactical inadvisability” of going to Angola. I was to convey potential political and legal problems for both Bacon and CIA should an ex-Agency officer enter Angola against Congressional wishes and the U.S. Neutrality Act.

I was allowed to tell Kayak I was on the task force, had traveled to Zaire and Zambia, but not to reveal that I spent several months inside southern Angola. (At the time, before the publication of Stockwell’s exposé, *In Search of Enemies*, the Agency’s role in Angola was not confirmed.)

Although Kayak had moved around since he resigned, it did not take long to determine his activities and pinpoint his location. I did not employ super-secret techniques or use NSA, as Hollywood portrays such searches, but relied on an informal network of friends and paramilitary advisors who served in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Just old-fashioned, “work-the-phones” gumshoe stuff.

The last time I had seen Kayak was July 1975. I remember well the final meeting. Kayak and “Hardnose” both resigned and left the Agency on the same day. Hardnose, or Mike, and I entered the CIA’s Paramilitary program together five years before, and were roommates during a grueling year-long training course.

Mike and I crossed the cactus and snake-infested Sonoran desert in sweltering



In a Soviet-built transport plane, Cuban and Marxist Angolan Army (FAPLA) officers return to Luanda from the operation in which George Bacon was killed in a clash with a Cuban Army Patrol. Hugo Ruiz, then a young print journalist, is shown in the rear passageway.

courtesy Hugo Ruiz



Two unidentified European members of the Bufkin-Callan mercenary group. Four of the group were KIA in contacts with Cuban and Angolan patrols ca. 13 February 1976, the day George Bacon died.

Cuban Government/Political Graphics



Wounded member of Bacon’s group. Cuban medics provided medical aid to the captured WIA. Bacon was killed because he was armed and tried to escape under chaotic conditions.

Cuban Government/Political Graphics



Cuban and Angolan troops peer at a European captive, just loaded aboard a flatbed, as he writhes in pain from his wounds. (right) While George Bacon and his associates encountered death and disaster after three days in Angola, author Chip Beck survived nearly four months in-country during periods of heavy turmoil and combat involving UNITA, FNLA, MPLA, Cuban and South African forces. Much of the author's survival depended on the strategic and tactical skills of these two men, UNITA President Jonas Savimbi and UNITA Commanding General Samuel Chiwale, shown here planning an offensive on MPLA, Cuban and Soviet advisors at Luso.



August, slept inside logs crawling with spiders in the Sierras, and slogged through Florida's Everglades teeming with alligators and mosquitoes that year. Two other teammates, and a third friend, were killed in Laos after we were deployed to Indochina in 1971. All of us formed special bonds in training and combat.

Kayak entered the "PM program" after Mike and I, but Mike and Kayak subsequently served together at the infamous Long Tieng base near the Plaine des Jarres, while I operated farther north, out of Luang Prabang. During the movement of advisors and troops from one military region to another, reacting to the dry season — monsoon tactical shifts by the North Vietnamese Army in Laos, all of us worked together from time-to-time. We knew each other socially, decompressing during encounters in the bars of Vientiane, Udorn, or Bangkok.

After the war in Laos ended in 1973, I was sent deep inside Cambodia, where I stayed until the fall of Phnom Penh and Saigon. I was joined for a while by Mike. Kayak got involved in Vietnam, where he served with the Green Berets in the late 1960s.

When Indochina collapsed in April 1975, Kayak was outraged that America "allowed" the defeat. There was no doubt that Kayak preferred to experience defeat a la Dien Bien Phu, rather than exit as we did. All advisors, who lost friends killed during the war, were angered and ashamed at the ignominious conclusion, but we accepted it. We knew it was preordained. Kayak viewed it as a temporary setback.

Kayak protested U.S. policies toward Vietnam in letters to editors, and raised funds for indigenous forces wanting to continue fighting communists in Laos and Vietnam. Kayak was mildly rebuked by Headquarters for his activism, and decided he could no longer work for the Agency. He decided he could do more "in the war against communism" on his own.

Mike hated desk jobs, and being a peace-time intelligence officer. He too resigned.

The three of us bid farewell in the Agency's spacious cafeteria the day Mike and Kayak left. Sunlight poured in through the high glass wall of what was then the West end of the CIA building.

I told Mike and Kayak they should reconsider their decision.

"... They'll Need Knuckledraggers Again."

"It's still a crazy world. These things go in cycles. Before long

they'll need Knuckle-draggers again," I said, using the pejorative term for paramilitary officers that we adopted as a term of endearment.

They either disagreed or decided they could not wait that long.

The wait was shorter than even I anticipated. Six weeks after our cafeteria meeting, a Learjet flown by two British pilots briefly touched down in Silva Porto, Angola, deep inside the war-torn country, discharging a passenger as the jet flew from Zaire to Zambia.

That passenger was me. I was a "singleton operative" in the southern expanses of Angola controlled by Jonas Savimbi and the National Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA). The "rumble in the jungle" was underway.

Had Kayak and Mike stayed, they likely would have conducted operations ongoing in northern Angola, under the direction of another friend of mine, and mentor, Bill Buckley. It was another "adventure of a life-time," and one which America and its allies should have won. Again, political concerns played inevitable roles and the first symptoms of the "Vietnam Syndrome" kicked in. In the 100 days inside Angola, I experienced incredible adventures, and saw the might of the USSR and Cuba nearly repulsed, until Congress stepped in and saved the day, for Moscow. But that is another story.

Super Bowl Sunday

When I located Kayak, in January 1976, he was at his parents' house in Rehobeth, Massachusetts, storing belongings, packing, and prophetically, updating his will, although I did not learn the last point until 1998.

I phoned Kayak, revealing I knew about his trip, which unnerved him a little. I asked to talk in person before he finalized his decisions. Kayak wanted everything over the telephone, but I insisted on a face-to-face meeting due to the sensitive information. He confirmed he was returning to Washington to get his visas and would meet then.

Kayak entered my home phone number into his address book, which later provided his father with the means to reach me years later. That contact led me to attempt the remains-recovery operation now underway with the help of the Cuban government.

George arrived at my Burke, Virginia, house 20 miles from Washington on Super Bowl Sunday. He appeared as the game began, and left as it ended. To this day, I can't recall who even played the game. Although we played the TV as "background noise," our conversation about Angola and politics was so intense that we ignored the sporting event. It seemed insignificant compared to things we experienced in the past few years — the Laos exodus, Indochina's collapse, and the new African wars.

Four hours we talked. I detailed Bufkin's false press statements, his true background, fabricated credentials, and his psychology of deceit, lies, and scams. I told Kayak that Bufkin had no combat experience nor serious training beyond boot camp.

Although Bufkin repeated boot camp perhaps three times by re-enlisting under false names, pumping out push-ups doesn't develop combat command skills. I used all my skills to convince George that Bufkin was a phony not worth dying for.

In talking to Kayak, Strathern authorized me to confirm the deteriorating situation in Angola, especially that FNLA forces, where Kayak planned to go, teetered on total collapse as the Cuban Expeditionary Forces and FAPLA troops (MPLA's army) rolled up the landscape. As a civilian, CIA owed George none of this, but as former comrades, we wanted to keep him from harm's way, and protect the Agency's reputation.

The Cubans and FAPLA had broken the FNLA partial encirclement of Luanda that existed in the fall of 1975 with aid from the U.S., Zaire, South Africa, and even China. When the Church Amendment brought down the logistical system and stopped the overseas pipeline, the FNLA crumbled, in contrast to UNITA's southern defiance.

By January, Cuban-MPLA forces moved steadily northward along the coast, toward the Zaire border where FNLA supplies coming down the Congo River were inserted into Angola near a town called Banana.

During our Super Bowl talk I warned George, as a "situation-knowledgeable" friend, that he would "not last 72 hours" if he executed his plans. George accepted my analysis, background and facts, saying finally he would not go to Angola.

I reported George's statement to Strathern, but added that I could not assess his veracity. Only time would tell.

Subsequent events revealed Kayak lied. He secretly departed with the mercenaries after telling a lady-friend he might never see her again. On 13 February, three days after entering northern Angola, Kayak was killed by the Cuban patrol, as I predicted, and his companions captured.

I understand why Kayak deceived me. He was stubbornly focused on his mission, and fully committed to execute an audacious act he thought possible despite the odds. Knowing I would file a report to Africa Division about his decision to discard his plans, he hoped to buy time and quickly exit the U.S.

Once Kayak was overseas, he was beyond the legal reach of the State Department or CIA for all practical purposes. He could deal with consequences of returning to the U.S. later.

Holden Roberto, the FNLA leader putting up money for Bufkin's operation, was Zairian President Mobutu Sese-Seko's brother-in-law. Even the Kinshasa Station Chief, who wielded considerable clout with Mobutu (see Stockwell's book for background), was unlikely to block Roberto's plans. Quite possibly, the Kinshasa

COS, whom I had briefed on periodic exits from the war zone, liked the concept of foreign mercenaries stirring up Angola. It matched his boozy, backwater way of conducting operations.

As feared, Roberto's funding of Bufkin's mercenaries fed charges that CIA backed the group. The Church Committee and the *Washington Post* publicly revealed the CIA budget for the Angolan operation, (which was 10% of the Soviet outlay), noting that funds were used to support UNITA and FNLA against the Soviet-backed MPLA.

The fact that Roberto paid Bufkin to hire, transport, and equip the mercenary force was seen by some journalists and Congressmen as a CIA "cut-out" mechanism for financing hired guns to replace the departing paramilitary professionals

In truth, CIA adamantly opposed Roberto's use of the Bufkin-Callan mercs, because it involved Americans, amateurs, and because Congress had spoken. In Watergate's wake, not a soul in Gerald Ford's CIA or administration wanted a Congressional confrontation.

A possible exception was the irascible Kinshasa Station Chief, who



The Unfortunate. Just before the four European and American soldiers of fortune with the Bufkin-Callan group died, so too were many Cuban Expeditionary Force soldiers killed. Many Cubans, white and black, fought and died over more than a decade of intense fighting in Angola's civil war.



had a habit of transmitting only what he wanted Mobutu and Roberto to hear from Washington. When I first met the COS, en route to Angola, his instructed me to disobey fundamental orders issued by headquarters to field Stations overseeing the Angola operation. The orders came from the National Security Council and Secretary

of State Henry Kissinger.

Under those orders, instructions, and guidance, I was strictly an "observer" inside Angola, not an "advisor." I could go as close to combat as I dared, defend myself, fight to avoid capture, get killed, taken prisoner, or eaten by wild animals, but I could not tell Savimbi or his men how to conduct the war. I could function as an intelligence officer, collect information, be a conduit, and transmit reports via my World War II-era combat communications gear.

The COS's guidance before I boarded the British Learjet was unambiguous. "If you need to be an advisor, be an advisor. I don't want an observer down there." I neither protested nor accepted his instructions, but let him continue talking. I knew what I had to do — and that meant being an observer, not an advisor.

Fortunately, Jonas Savimbi was a brilliant strategist and tactician. UNITA was highly organized compared to the FNLA or MPLA. In southern Angola, against all odds, Savimbi rolled up the landscape in the time I was there. I had no need to "advise," but I had tons to "observe" and report.

We'll probably never know what guidance, if any, the COS gave Holden Roberto regarding Bufkin.

Roberto probably comingled every dollar he received over the course of his political life with every other dollar — whether they came from his rich father-in-law (Mobutu was one of the world's wealthiest men, having looted Africa's richest country to amass his fortunes), the U.S., or during the anti-Portuguese years, from the Russians.

Like many Africans playing the Cold War game, Roberto was adept at creative accounting. He could well have used CIA funds to illegally and improperly fund Bufkin's mercenaries. But he had access to other funds. The price for hired soldiers was minuscule compared to what Mobutu considered "petty cash."

Based on activities I cannot talk about, the CIA without doubt opposed agency money being used to finance Roberto's schemes. Roberto's war performance was so poor — in spite of FNLA receiving the "lion's share" sent to the pro-Western forces, that John Stockwell (then Chief/ATF) was of a mind to let FNLA sink on its own.

Only Jonas Savimbi, who witnessed Mobutu's army and FNLA

Continued on page 89



Between Roxanna And A Hard Place

Love And War In Vietnam, 1969

by Col. Mike Peck (Ret.)

Photos courtesy author

“**B**unch of limp-dicked old men.” I thought with supreme annoyance as I tried to drive thoughts of Roxanna’s graceful supple body from my mind. This was difficult, for several reasons: First, Roxanna was absolutely beautiful; second, I was trapped like a rat inside the barbed wire at Tan An, making encounters with the fair sex rather few and far between; and, third, the object of my desires had just sent me a note — via helicopter — inviting me to her apartment in Saigon. I lay on my bunk in the 3rd Brigade compound

and tried unsuccessfully to sleep, while goddamning Ron Crooks, my boss, and Lieutenant Colonel Greg (“Matt”) Dillon, the Brigade XO, for being dickheads.

I was on my second tour in “the Nam,” and had recently returned from a vacation in Japan, as a guest of the 249th General Hospital at Camp Drake, where all the king’s horses and all the king’s men had eventually managed to get me up and on my feet again. I was supposed to go from Camp Drake to Walter Reed, but had decided on my own to go back to Vietnam, instead, to

finish my tour and collect up all the weapons and personal equipment I had taken over with me. Surprisingly, this seemed to have caused a minor stir, and managed to upset the toads at Walter Reed to no end. Until things were straightened out, Julian J. Ewell, Commanding General of the 9th Division, adopted me as his *aide-de-camp*. I had come back thinking I would

simply return to my old unit, "Charlie" Company of the 2nd of the 39th Infantry, and hit the paddies once again. Instead of sending me back to my old outfit, though, Major General Ewell, assigned me to the 3rd Brigade, where I was to remain until I had fully recovered from the gunshot wounds that had caused my premature departure in the first place. Reluctantly, I

had to admit that he did the right thing — as was usually the case. Due to my extended IV diet, I had lost not only about 20 pounds in the hospital, but also lost much of the stamina and endurance I had built up wading around in the Delta prior to being hit and evacuated. Although working the 15 to 18 hour days as an Assistant Operations Officer (S3) was no where near as taxing as leading a rifle company in that impossible environment, I was rather surprised at how tired I would be at the end of the day. It took me a long time to figure out that I was never going to fully recover.

Anyway, while working at the Division Headquarters with General Ewell, I met Roxanna, an incredibly beautiful, artistic, and adventurous woman who was working as a freelance writer and photographer for AP and UPI. She was a fascinating female, but perhaps her most intriguing aspect (at least to me) was the fact that she carried a 9mm Luger pistol in a pre-war, brown military holster. I knew I was in love.

Having spent a year and a half in the Highlands with Special Forces, I was a fairly savvy cat when I was getting ready for my second go-round. For the sojourn with the 9th, I smuggled in an accurized, Colt-manufacture M1911A1 with a slotted main-spring housing, which the guys at the Fort Benning Marksmanship Committee had made for me. The T-slot was milled to accept a Browning-type stock, which a cabinet-maker fashioned from a pattern that I had furnished. I had met him at the lumberyard in my hometown, where I had worked one summer while still in school, and he skillfully inletted the end to accept an attaching lug, which I had picked up at the Davis Gun Shop, in Phenix City, Alabama, across the river from Fort Benning. I also purchased four Triple K 20-shot .45 magazines while I was there. After attaching a Boyt G.I. holster to the flat-board stock, I had a very neat and effective carbine (see "Low Plains Drifter," Part I, February 2001). In addition to the .45, I took in a 1940-date, Mauser-code, P08 Luger, along with a brown Swedish Lahti holster, which had pockets on the side for two spare 8-shot magazines, plus a cleaning rod and a magazine loading tool/screw driver. The loading tool required a little filing on the inside, after which it worked quite well with the 9 x 19 Luger magazines. I also had a brown WWI belt pouch with two more mags, for those bad-hair days. My primary town-gun was a Mauser 1910 in 6.35mm (.25 ACP), which was a little large and heavy for a .25, so for maximum concealability I had a Beretta 950, also in .25 caliber. It was only slightly smaller than the Mauser, but its aluminum frame made it a great deal lighter. During my adventures prior to evacuation I had captured a 9mm Inglis Browning P-35, in addition to a couple of Tokarevs (Chinese K-54s) in 7.62x25mm. The Canadian Inglis worked great with my .45 stock, even though the holster was a bit too big.

Although there were some who might have thought that I had returned premature-



(opposite) I was with the 101st on my second extended tour. Roxanna, back in Vietnam, paid me a visit. We went to Hue, shot-up the place, and got grabbed by some MPs. What a great date! (above) I'm nothing if not eclectic: Note my French-commando attire, the Lahti holster and the German G3 with telescopic stock and bipod.

ly from the hospital system out of a deep and abiding devotion to duty, it was actually to collect up all the stuff I had brought over with me. Fortunately, most of my equipment had been locked up in a trunk at Fire Support Base Moore, and Sergeant First Class Williams, my Field First, saved it all for me, just as he had promised when he tossed me aboard the medevac chopper. He knew that when I said I would be back, I meant it. Others were no so convinced. I had lost my .45 in the Plain of Reeds during the medevac, but it had subsequently been recovered during a sweep of the battlefield. Since it was so unique — and since no one at the higher echelons thought they would ever see me again — someone at Division presented it to an ARVN general in Can Tho. It took me several months to get it back. When I finally got to Can Tho, I showed the general the stock, since he had not understood the purpose of the slot in the butt. When he saw how it worked, he was willing to give me his wife and all his daughters for it, so I ended up trading him my Inglis Browning, plus an original Chinese stock that we had captured when I was with the 2-39. Like his Chinese cousins, the general was totally enamored of the holster/stock concept. He never came through on any of the daughters, though.

Saigon FOB

While negotiating the return of my .45, I carried the Luger almost exclusively. I was packing it in a G.I. shoulder holster at Dong Tam when I first spotted Roxanna, bouncing along (and I do mean *bouncing* — in all the right places) with her Luger riding on one of her shapely hips. Of course, I pounced on her instantly, and we become lovers that same night. Because privacy was such a premium at a base like Dong Tam, we had to be crafty and innovative with our love-making — which made it all the more ful-



On a prisoner chase using a silenced Sterling I got from the Australians. My trusty "wingman" covers me with my sniper rig.

filling. It turned out she had an apartment in Saigon, which served as her base of operations, and, on the pretext of going to the 93rd Evac for periodic check-ups, I was able to visit her there. Totally incredible!

Once I was reassigned to the 3rd Brigade, I had slightly more latitude for sneaking around, and, when she was in the area, Roxanna would always visit me at the compound, where we would find an empty bunker or slip into the tiny hootch I shared with Joe Johnson to make wild and dizzying love on my cot, with our Lugers tossed together on the floor. These séances were inevitably off the charts, since I always needed her softness and her femininity so desperately.

We had been absentee lovers for several months at this point, and it was on the afternoon of 22 February 1969, that I received my invitation to visit her in Saigon. She was always very clever with words, but, from the tone of her short letter, I knew exactly what she had in mind. Operationally, things seemed kind of slow at that point, so I went off to find Major Crooks to see if I could get away.

He was at the draftsman's table poring over a bunch of maps, busily planning some grand and sweeping operation, so I slithered up, put on my most winning smile, and asked, "Hey, Dad, can I have the keys to the helicopter tonight?"

"Huh?" was his less-than-enthusiastic rejoinder.

"No, seriously, can I go up to Saigon to do some coordination or something at MACV, like maybe this evening; last thing out; you know."

He pondered my request for about a nanosecond, then responded, "No, I don't know. What are you up to *this* time?"

On very shaky ground, I hastily explained, "Well, I was thinking that maybe I could courier some documents somewhere and sort of get stranded for a day or so in the big city."

The Major's countenance assumed his characteristic lop-sided smirk and said, "Right! You want to go do the deed with Little Miss Muffet, is what you're really after."

"Well, yessir, I guess," I admitted.

He snorted, "You guess? Right! You expect me to authorize another trip to Saigon just so you can roll around in the sack with your girlfriend — *again*, I might add. Meantime, I haven't even been able to get out of this place to go on R&R."

"But, Sir, you're married, and all ..."

"What the hell has that got to do with the



"Caught him!" Lt. Col. Tom Legget borrows my radio to evac our POW. I'm standing by with my MP40 submachine gun but our captive's not going anywhere.

price of poontang in Pyongyang?" More snorting. "You just came back from nailing all the nurses in the Army Medical Corps, to hear you tell it, and now you have the *cojones* to come and ask me for time off to do more of the same. Forget it! Where's your patriotism, Boy?"

"Aw, c'mon, Sir. No one will know but you, me, Roxy — and, of course, the Siberian Husky." At least that drew a laugh.

We bantered back and forth a bit more until he finally relented, "OK, OK! For chrissakes! Go ask Colonel Dillon. If he agrees, and something is going north, I don't care. Get someone to cover you for the briefing. Now scram." He rolled his eyes and added, "God help us all!"

Allriiiiiight!

I scuttled off to find Colonel Dillon, but found him in a bad humor and totally unsympathetic. He was pissed at me because the day before he caught me with a round in the chamber of my pistol. He wanted to see the Luger and I handed it over, sort

of remembering that on some models, when the safety is on, you can't jack the toggle back. I didn't think he would know how to work it and would admire it a little then hand it back. No such luck. It fooled him for about half a minute, but he managed to get its unique action open, and out popped a shiny 124-grain 9mm round of Australian manufacture. *Oh shit!* Usually you got a fine for that, but I got a good ass-chewing instead, since I was considered a very accomplished gunfighter at the time — and we were good friends. Notwithstanding, he ragged me a bit, then flatly turned me down, with a certain amount of amusement at my consternation. *Prick!*

And so, there I was, in an empty bed, bemoaning my unfortunate lot.

One of the other items I packed up for the trip to Southeast Asia was a Weaver B-4 telescopic sight, complete with the mount that my brother had made for me during my tour with the 5th Special Forces. It fit on the carrying handle of an AR15/M16, much like

the models that were later manufactured commercially. I had also managed to lose my CAR15 with the Colt 3X scope in the Plain of Reeds when I was hit, so, when I got back from the hospital, I picked up a brand new M16 from Division supply and sighted it in at the Old Reliable Academy (where new guys in-country, assigned to the 9th Division, were sent for orientation). The "experts" in Hartford were still trying to work the bugs out of the M16s at that time, but if you used them strictly on semi-auto, they were sort of OK. I much preferred my German MP40 for in close, or an M14, if I wanted to reach out and touch someone; however, like Mussolini, Westmoreland was always right, and the M16 was there to stay — whether it worked or not.

I had finally gone to sleep when the little sound-power phone by my bunk started a gawdawful racket. They were supposed to make a sound like a frog (to fool a really stupid enemy, I guess), and mine was croaking like a bullfrog during the mating season. It was Lieutenant Colonel Dillon.

"Goddamn him," I thought, "Now I suppose he is going to dick with me all night long."

He was calling from the southwest bunker and told me to get my ass down there most rickety tick and to bring my sniper rifle. I was still convinced that he was simply having a little fun at my expense, so I dressed for the occasion, putting on the bright red paratrooper beret and the camouflage jump smock I had been presented at the end of French Commando School. For good measure, I buckled on my leather WWII harness, as well. Once attired in my eclectic outfit, I ambled on down to the bunker to render a snappy rifle salute to Lt. Col. Dillon.

"Christ, Peck, is it Halloween and somebody just forgot to tell me? What the hell are you doing in that get-up?" was his reaction to my costume.

"No, Sir. Lots of shitty tricks, but no treats. Just thought I'd add a touch of class to the occasion. What's up?"

He told me that while he was inspecting the perimeter guard, the guys in the bunker reported that they thought they had seen some movement to their front. They had popped a couple of hand flares, and could see what appeared to be a clump of vegetation that they did not remember being there before. Still convinced that I was being playfully harassed, I poked the M16 out the aperture facing the suspect object, and scanned the area with my 4-power telescopic sight. A scope, or binoculars, is a real help in seeing at night, and I could make out something, but could not identify it. It now appeared that the Colonel was not joking. We climbed up on top of the bunker for a better look, along with one of the guards who had an M79. More hand flares. It sort of looked like one of the local workers, who periodically cut the grass out in front of the Claymores, had dropped a bundle of reeds



Me and my accursed .45 with the holster/stock attached. Just out of the hospital where I'd lost a bunch of weight, we'd just taken some sniper fire.

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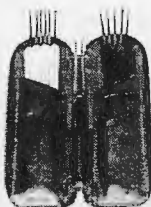
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Timeline To Trouble

Continued from page 49

moderate but a cousin of Saddam) lashes out against U.S. bombardment of Iraq, announces support of Iraq.

- 7 Feb 91: In daily intel brief, CIA mentions discrepancies between Washington and Riyadh regards success of attacks on Iraqi armor.
- 8 Feb 91: In-theater, Cheney and Powell give final review of ground war plans.
- 11 Feb 91: Israelis complain about ineffectiveness of Patriot missiles against Scuds; Russians send Yevgeni Primakov to Baghdad to urge Iraqi withdrawal.
- 13 Feb 91: Airstrikes on Al Firdos bunker complex in Baghdad kill more than 200 civilians, leading to restrictions on strategic bombing campaign.
- 15 Feb 91: Official broadcasts from Baghdad suggest Iraq is willing to pack it in: Bush rejects notion as a "cruel hoax."
- 16 Feb 91: VII Corps moves up to the LD.
- 17 Feb 91: Tariq Aziz goes to Moscow to discuss possible negotiated end to the war.
- 18 Feb 91: U.S.S. *Princeton* and U.S.S. *Tripoli* hit mines in Gulf.
- 20 Feb 91: 1st Cav runs a feint up the Wadi al Batin.
- 21 Feb 91: Bush sets deadline of 1200 hours, 23 February for Iraqi withdrawal; National Defense Service Medal authorized.
- 22 Feb 91: U.S. Marines infiltrate into Kuwait.
- 23 Feb 91: Unaware of Coalition POWs held there, F-117 stealths paste Iraqi G2 HQ; U.S. SpecOps inserted deep into Iraqi territory; Iraqis torch an estimated 700 Kuwaiti oil wells, creating the pollution disaster of the century.
- 24 Feb 91: The ground war Desert Storm begins when Schwarzkopf accelerates VII Corps main attack by 15 hours, to 0400 Saudi time; U.S. Army, Marines and Coalition forces move into Iraq and Kuwait; although numerous and armed, Iraqi forces are poorly led and poorly motivated after the thorough air-prepping — more surrender than fight; the Coalition functions well and rolls over Iraqi forces in a textbook war; allied casualties are light, enemy casualties are heavy, and dealing with surrendering Iraqi forces becomes a problem.
- 25 Feb 91: 101st Airborne cuts Highway

8 in Euphrates Valley; Iraqis counterattack 1st Mar Div; lucky Scud falls on U.S. barracks in Al Khobar, Saudi — kills 28 and wounds 98 G.I.s.

- 26 Feb 91: Iraqis bug out of Kuwait City with everything they can carry; VII Corps hits Republican Guard in Battle of 73 Easting; Kuwaiti resistance leaders declare they are in control of Kuwait City; the things that worked: planning, comms, air prep and control of the air, deception, speed, superior logistics, superior training and motivation.
- 27 Feb 91: President Bush orders a ceasefire effective at midnight local.
- 28 Feb 91: Cessation of hostilities declared 0801 hours.
- 1 Mar 91: Ceasefire terms negotiated at Safwan.
- 2 Mar 91: 24th Infantry Division tangles with Hammurabi Division as it heads for home, destroys some 600 vehicles.
- 3 Mar 91: Iraq agrees to abide by previous UN resolutions; Schwarzkopf meets Iraqi generals at Safwan.
- 5 Mar 91: Most Coalition POWs are released.
- 13 Mar 91: Award of Southwest Asia Service medal authorized.
- 17 Mar 91: DoD announces first troop redeployment, 24th Inf Div home to Ft. Stewart, Ga.
- 5 Apr 91: Bush announces U.S. relief supply airdrops to Kurdish refugees in Turkey and northern Iraq.
- Apr 91: Iraq officially accepts terms of ceasefire; Task Force Provide Comfort deploys.
- Apr 91: U.S. transports deliver 72,000 tons of supplies in first six Operation Provide Comfort missions.
- Apr 91: Ceasefire takes effect.
- Apr 91: Construction begins on first Operation Provide Comfort tent city near Zakhu, Iraq.
- 7 Jun 91: UN commission assumes responsibility for Kurdish refugees.
- 8 Jun 91: Victory parade in Washington. You always have to have a victory parade.
- 2 Aug 92: Iraq again lays claim to Kuwait.

Frank Hopkins is a frequent contributor to SOF. ☞

Bloody Biafra

Continued from page 71

was that. It was pretty precise operation and spoke a lot for the skill of the old timers flying these aging hulks: Many of the pilots were retired airline veterans.

Flight Of The Intruder

A Nigerian air force bomber that had been dubbed "Intruder" by the civilian flight crews was flown by more mercs. It usually hovered at about 18,000 feet and would wait for things to develop. Its pilot would try to drop his HE canisters just as an approaching aircraft came into finals, the hope being that the explosives would go off immediately before touchdown.

As Forsyth recalls, "anyone listening in on the same wavelength could hear merc pilots flying the Nigerian bombers jeering at them, daring them to land when the lights flashed those few elusive seconds."

The bombers rarely succeeded in causing serious damage. But when they did, the Nigerian propaganda machine would spin into action and Lagos newspapers would crow that Uli Airport had been crippled. It sometimes took a week to put things right again and often the Biafrans would find alternate stretches of road. Then the process would begin all over again.

A notable sidelight to these events is that in their final approach to Uli Airport, many pilots would come in so low that their fuselage would sometimes clip the tops of palms. Later, back at base, aircrews would compare notes about "green props." Just about everybody experienced them from time to time. There was also the occasional "red prop." Since most loading teams were made up of tribesmen who knew little about the dangers of modern aircraft, and there were instances of them walking into propellers while the planes were being offloaded.

Once on the ground, Biafran crews — most of them clearly malnourished because there was no food in the country — went to work with a gusto. Obviously with a bomber overhead, and pilots not wanting to spend longer on the ground than was necessary, there was an extreme urgency about it all. Aircrews would keep their engines running and cargoes would often be cleared within minutes. If it were food, Roman Catholic White Fathers in their long cassocks would direct operations. Munitions were handed by the Biafran Army and would be hurried away in trucks.

Mercy Cargo

Meanwhile other Biafran officials would indicate what or who was to go out that night. Most of the outgoing cargoes consisted of starving, mostly orphaned children who were sent off to camps in other parts of Africa such as Kilometre Onze, in Gabon, or a succession of Roman Catholic church institutions, in Sao Tome. The Biafrans were also taking out a thousand tons of

cacao or copra a month on these planes.

Things became more tense once we approached Uli. What I wasn't to know until after it happened was that the "Intruder" had dropped his load while our L-1049H Super Constellation — in concert with half a dozen other freighters — were brought into finals. Our wheels were already down.

Then came a brilliant flash, quickly answered by some heavy stuff from clusters of Biafran Bofors anti-aircraft guns on the periphery. A line of tracers cut across our nose. Herman, very sober now, pulled back sharply on the throttle. In retrospect, it seemed that even a drunk was likely to have his mind sharply focused by someone trying to kill him. The old four-engined bird lumbered slowly towards starboard and an excuse for cloud that passed for cover. We circled for another hour before we tried again and this time were able to get down.

None of us who went in that night will forget the clammy heat that enveloped us like a sauna once we stepped into the tropical night. I crouched in a split-pole bunker beside the runway together with a couple of others. There was a musty, unwashed immediacy to it all, sharpened by the stutter of automatic fire some way down the runway. What they hell were they firing at in the dark? I asked. Nobody answered.

Alongside us were several tall palms, their foliage blown away: All that was left of what was once a pretty substantial palm oil plantation that probably dated from the colonial era. The image presented was one of thousands of giant naked fingers pointing upwards towards the sky.

Alongside us, perhaps 20 paces away, was a barely recognizable tail section of a Joint Church Aid Globemaster C-97 that had crashed a month before.

That, the priests in their robes, occasional bursts of automatic fire coupled to the roar of engines of aircraft landing and taking off made for something extraordinarily surreal. I've never experienced anything like it since and I've covered a lot of wars.

Herman didn't even bother to wave goodbye. He was airborne again in minutes. For a while an uneasy silence descended on the jungle around us, broken now and again by the rattle of more automatic fire.

An Ibo officer — a Captain, I think, with the distinctive Biafran "Rising Sun" patch on his arm, came towards me at a brisk pace. He had a Sten gun under his arm.

"I take it that you are Mr. Venter of the *Daily Express*?" he said with a salute and in an accent more reminiscent of Salisbury Plain than Africa: It was all terribly British. He introduced himself as Major Charles Ofili.

The more things change in Africa, the more they stay the same. Don't miss next issue and Col. Mike Peck's article on U.S. Special Forces now training Nigerian troops for peacekeeping duties in war-torn Sierra Leone. ☒



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or sticks and left them there. There was a small depression in the ground behind it, and something might have been in it, but it was still hard to tell exactly what it was.

I wanted to dump a couple of rounds into the object of our attention to see what would happen, but Lt. Col. Dillon vetoed the plan. Instead he called for a "firefly", a helicopter with a searchlight mounted on the bottom. We continued to observe the object and speculate as to its nature while waiting for the firefly to launch from the near-by airfield. He arrived on station from his alert posture in record time, and Colonel Dillon instructed him to illuminate the area for me. As soon as he flashed on his light we all saw that the "object" was a goddamn VC lying in a shallow depression behind a bundle of sticks, which he had carefully camouflaged. He had good concealment, but no cover, so the 55-grain bullet out of the 5.56x45mm case zipped through the sticks and cancelled his program 1/32nd of a second later. One of his legs flipped up when the bullet impacted, so I shot him once again for good measure. The firefly had pulled some altitude when I fired, but then came down to confirm that it *was* a VC in uniform and he *was* very still. The bunker guard had the pilot on speaker, and he was doing his *Cool Hand Luke* monotone, like they always did, when all of a sudden he yelled, in a very un-cool manner, "Holy shit!"

His light went out and he booked out of there while pulling max pitch for enough altitude to clear the growth of nipa palm. Before we had a chance to wonder what had gotten into him, a salvo of 107mm rockets passed over our heads, with a series of hair-raising *whooshes*, and we all echoed in unison, "Holy shit!"

We instantly figured out that the dude I had just shot was a forward observer and had been putting out aiming stakes for the rocket gunners when the guys in the bunker had spotted his movement. When he heard the flares being fired he had wriggled into the shallow hole and hid behind his bundle of aiming stakes. By calling in the firefly, Colonel Dillon had effectively pre-empted their attack. Although there were 107 rockets flying around all over hell, most were going high. The Colonel jumped down into the bunker to direct the fire and to mobilize a defense in the event of ground attack, while the perimeter guard and I returned fire from the top of the bunker. In addition to setting off their 107s, the Dicks were putting out one hell of a volume of fire, which convinced me that we about to be hit from the ground. The only thing that saved us was Matt Dillon directing a machinegun team on a .50 Caliber "Ma Deuce" in the bunker that was systematically tearing up the edge of the nipa palm where the Viets were located. I foolishly went to full-auto and was rewarded by a jam, which (typical-

ly) sheared the rim off the fired case and tried to ram another in on top of it. *Oh God. Ohhhhh Christ!*

That Comforting Thumping Primeval

As a company commander I had learned to carry a cleaning rod with the handle tucked into the little hollow on the right side of the M16 carrying handle just under the sight drum, and the end running through the handle, secured to the left side of the barrel with a couple of M60 machine gun links. We had all learned not to trust that damn gun. While rockets roared overhead and the whole area was drowned in automatic-weapons fire, I had the rod out and was nervously trying to clear the jam. Envisioning a swarm of Dinks attacking us at that point, I was mentally preparing myself to wait until they came over the wall, shoot one with my pistol, then jump down on him and grab his 7.62x39mm AKM with magazines — those things *always* worked. I was so convinced they were going to conduct a ground assault that I actually pulled out my Fairbairne-Sykes dagger and stuck it into a sandbag within easy reach while I fumbled with that abominable rifle. I would have given a month's pay for my MP40. An RPG went over the protective, chain-link screen and hit just below us, whereupon my wingman disappeared over the back, leaving me up there by myself. The explosion made me flinch and drop the cleaning rod, but I finally cleared my weapon and tried to shoot at muzzle flashes, not very effectively I might add, since the fire from the 107s, RPGs, and small arms was almost overwhelming. Throughout it all, the steady pounding of the .50 caliber was like the heartbeat of a gigantic prehistoric predator, meting out death and destruction to protect her young. It was oddly comforting to hear and feel its primeval thumping.

The rest of the compound finally got up and into the fight, which began to slack off once the rest of the guys weighed-in. Some dickbird had obviously spotted me on top of the bunker above the RPG screen and was slowly blowing my sand bag cover away with a rocket propelled grenade launcher. I was so busy ducking the stinging sand particles that I finally jumped down and scurried into the interior of the little redoubt, which was choked with pulverized sand from the near misses and burnt powder from the .50. It was so bad I had to go back outside. I quickly found a nice firing port on the wall where I was not so obvious, and continued to engage the flashes of the enemy weapons. Once I was convinced that we were not going to go at it hand-to-hand, I became a little bolder and was not so worried about conserving ammo. Since I had not taken the situation very seriously at first, I only brought one bandoleer of 20-round magazines with me — which was really dumb! The firing from the other team became more and more sporadic, but you could still see figures jumping and dancing in the flames of the fires started by the big .50's tracers and API (armor piercing incen-

diary) rounds. It was like a scene from *Dante's Inferno*. Very surrealistic.

Then the incoming fire stopped abruptly, as the attack force broke off and headed for cover. Our side continued to shoot up the countryside, out of fear and frustration, but it was all over. Colonel Dillon stumbled out of the bunker, choking, hacking, and rubbing his eyes; he looked like a smoked possum from all the cordite. Tough dude.

When he finally stopped coughing, he looked at me and said accusingly, "I assume you felt bad about shooting their spotter and decided to stay topside to take over his duties."

At first I did not understand him, and lamely responded, "But, Sir, I had a jam and was trying to clear it. I was only out of action for about a minute."

"No, godammit, I'm referring to that stupid Frenchie hat you're wearing. It's like a red homing beacon. You had the equivalent of a North Vietnamese province shooting at us. What were you doing waving it around? If I knew you were going to try to kill us all, I would have sent your ass off to Saigon." I finally got it, and we both had a good nervous laugh together.

And From Out Of The Sky ...

Because the VC were obliged to let go with their rockets prematurely, the damage to the compound was minimal, although the town got smashed up pretty good. Annoyingly enough, while we were going around assessing the damage and evacuating the wounded, we received a flash message that the compound was in imminent danger of a rocket attack. *Christ!* That was about par for the intel effort in Vietnam. "Matt" received a well-deserved Silver Star for saving all our asses, and I got a Bronze Star with "V" for my modest part in all the mayhem.

The silver lining, however, was that all the commotion brought a whole slug of correspondents and reporters down to cover the story, and who should turn up? None other than my foxy Roxanna. Colonel Dillon astutely pulled the guys out of the bunker so they could be interviewed, allowing Roxy and me to "inspect" it all by ourselves.

Wow!

We then went back to my hootch, where I helped her write her report — among other activities. I invited her to stay the night, just in case our visitors came back for another try, but it was too difficult logistically, so she left on the last bird out. That closed the loop in a very vicious circle, and I concluded that, other than the wear and tear on my nerves, things had not turned out so badly after all.

To all the Viet Cong out there who were involved in the attack and are still around, "Good show, guys. You have my sincere thanks."

Col. Mike Peck (Ret.), a highly decorated Vietnam veteran, was previously director of DIA's POW/MIA office in Washington, D.C. Presently, he is an international security consultant. ✕

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Continued Professionalism

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Jim Hawes: Now and then. Hawes spends most of his time these days in Asia, where he is a cofounder and director of the first U.S.-style venture capital firm in Asia.

joined one of the three-letter governmental agencies about which too much is known. All he will say about his life in that incarnation is that he traveled a lot. His meandering included a little-known, but highly successful, African war in what was Che Guevara's first unsuccessful attempt to export the Cuban revolution.

Leaving that organization at the end of the '60s, Hawes obtained an MBA from Harvard Business School and embarked on a business career that was principally centered in the Far East, although he returned to the States long enough to found, operate, and divest himself of a profitable petroleum-related company.

Hawes spends most of his time these days in Asia, where he is a cofounder and director of the first U.S.-style venture capital firm in Asia. Among other startup investments he is involved in is the development of a unique methodology of extracting natural gas from waste-disposal landfills.

His is a textbook case of a guy who had more than one dream and achieved them all.

John Roat

John Roat's story is one of success at every level he sought it, although success in his case has not been measured in financial terms yet! As yet another member of East Coast Class 29, Roat did not take long to create a reputation as a bad boy in UDT-21 in Little Creek, VA. He would fight or run a footrace in a New York minute.

Roat was saved from an early exit from the Navy by a sympathetic UDT officer, LCDR Pat Badger, who arranged for him to

be exiled from the Teams for a year instead of being sent to jail. After a solid year of good behavior in the Fleet, Roat was accepted into SEAL Team One, where he became a solid operator with one of the early platoons deployed to Vietnam.

John Roat was a warrior, whether in the rice paddies of Southeast Asia or in the bars of San Diego. Ultimately, however, he pursued his long-time love of diving and left the Navy for a career in offshore construction diving. He spent over 20 years in that business before "settling down" in California to (at least this was his plan!) become certified in computer operations.

Things didn't work out that way, as Roat began to toy with the idea of writing a book about the Teams. This he did in a remarkable little paperback, *Class 29, The Making of U.S. Navy SEALs*, a book which has generated phenomenal interest in the Underwater Demolition and SEAL teams of the 1960s and 1970s. Writing in an idiom all his own, Roat has put together an account of his UDT training class and every single one of its members. He has become something of a cult figure among his teammates as a result.



Mike Noell, a "new guy" in the overall scheme of things, who left the Navy and started "Blackhawk Industries," a firm that has become a leader in supplying quality combat webgear. Headquartered in Virginia Beach, VA, just down the road from the East Coast home of the Teams in Little Creek, Blackhawk has become the supplier of choice to hundreds of military and law-enforcement organizations throughout the world.

What Measure Success?

Success is measured in a thousand ways, but I daresay that the qualities that went into the making of Navy frogmen, or SEALs, are common throughout the community. I think, among others, of Jim Short, a brawling, boozing Korean War frog who was expected to achieve very little by his teammates. That's the same Dr. Jim Short who is Chief Medical Officer at the Throckmorton County Hospital in West Texas.

I also think of Mike Noell, a "new guy" in the overall scheme of things, who left the Navy and started "Blackhawk Industries," a firm that has become a leader in supplying quality combat webgear. Headquartered in Virginia Beach, VA, just down the road from the East Coast home of the Teams in Little Creek, Blackhawk (www.blackhawkindustries.com) has become the supplier of choice to hundreds of military and law-enforcement organizations throughout the world.

Guess Who?

There are literally scores, no, hundreds of success stories about "Team guys." Has anybody heard of a rambunctious sailor named Jim Janos (a.k.a. "The Dirty," due to his hygienic habits)? As his Executive Officer at UDT-12, I often wondered which side of the law he would wind up on! This guy was definitely not one destined for superstardom, but guess who he grew up to be? None other than Jesse "The Body" Ventura, governor of the great state of Minnesota, and a guy I'm proud to say I know!

And then there was this guy who was the senior enlisted man at SEAL Team Two when I reported aboard in 1964 — a guy named Rudy. Rudy was one squared-away individual, and it was perfectly predictable that he would achieve the highest level of recognition and responsibility in the Navy. This he did when he was chosen to be Senior Enlisted Advisor to General Jim Lindsay, first commander-in-chief of the U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, FL.

We in the SEAL community are still struggling to understand what happened to Rudy, who, it seems, was picked up by some second-rate reality-based TV program and became America's best-known senior citizen as a result! Yes, Rudy Boesch has become the Mae West of his generation and gender, and the SEALs of his acquaintance are green with envy at his selection in some mag as "The World's Sexiest Man," or something like that. Go, Rudy!

Having been a "lifer" in the SEAL community, I have followed the post-Navy careers of hundreds of former frogmen. Every single one of them has done something useful in his life, even those few who detoured off the beaten path en route to achieving success. There is a common defining factor within them all that impels, no, *compels*, them to be satisfied with nothing less than everything. While that is clearly an impossible goal, an astounding number of SEALs get pretty close.

Wish I could bottle up whatever it is and sell it. ☒

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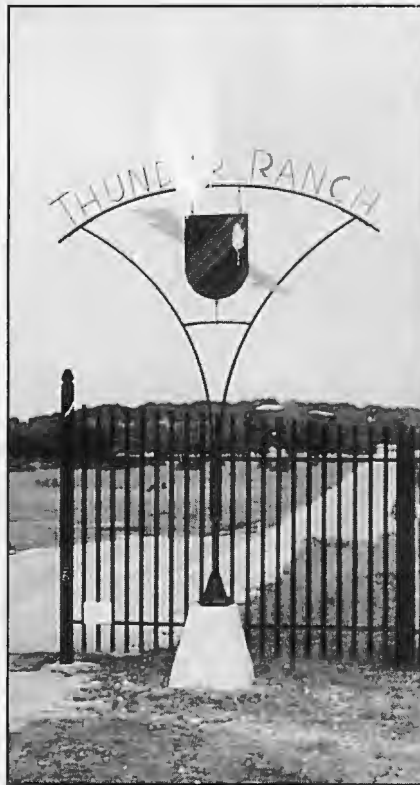


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AQM: Hammock

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AQM: Frontal Assault

Continued from page 19

additional items such as a whistle, and the usual SpecOps niceties like fully bound edges to preclude ever fouling the zipper. It's strong and can be stuffed tighter than Hillary's corset, but since accessibility is the program here, we'd suggest wearing more than one if you carry a lot of extras, to keep everything finger-tip handy. For their dimension and inconspicuous appearance, they hold an abundance. Strategically secured to your LBE, the Frontal Assault will be in constant use. Fundamental, adaptable, secure, eminently useful: You need one of these, even if you just use it to build a good first-aid kit, a specialized tool kit or a mini-bailout bag. Look for it at your PX/BX and the more sophisticated outdoor stores. Made in the U.S.A., lifetime guarantee.

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Kayak's Final Journey

Continued from page 77

siphon off supplies needed by UNITA, confounded expectations and turned the red tide in southern Angola.

Anyone thinking George Bacon was on a final secret mission for "the Company," is mistaken. He genuinely resigned after the Vietnam War and was never sent on a "non-official-cover" assignment. I talked to him when he resigned and I officially asked him to stay out of Angola. He was there on his own.

A Matter Of Principle

Still, there are things people don't know about Kayak. Primary is why this talented, bright young man, joined a class of men scorned in "polite society" as well as in the ranks of professional military men.

When I returned from Cuba in December 1998, and told Kayak's parents of progress locating individuals who might determine the whereabouts of their son's final resting place, the news was received not with anticipated joy, but uneasiness.

"In a way," George, Sr. told me, "we are worried sick about what people will say about 'Georgie.' There was so much talk about him being a mercenary when all this happened, and we don't consider that to be true. He wasn't like that. We want him back, but we don't know how to avoid all the negative publicity that we went through before. It's so hard on his mother and I."

Just as I know "Georgie," as his parents call their only son, was not a CIA Intelligence Officer when he died, so can I say that he was not a mercenary. I made the distinction to the Cuban military, foreign affairs, and intelligence officers to whom I proposed a humanitarian effort to locate and retrieve Kayak's body.

The Cubans understand distinctions between mercenaries, guerrillas, and freedom fighters, but an explanation here is necessary for the record, for George's parents, and for Kayak's memory.

During our Super Bowl talk, Kayak explained his motivations and beliefs in depth, revealing what drove him to Angola in the wake of Indochina's collapse.

Historically, "mercenary" means a paid, professional soldier or officer, usually of a different nationality, who accepts a commission (payment) to serve in the armed forces of another country. Mercenary is synonymous with "legionnaire" and "warrior" in that sense. If that definition is employed, Kayak would agree he fit the description.

In WWI, 100,000 ethnic Czech Legionnaires fought as an organized mercenary force for the Czar of Russia against Kaiser Wilhelm. When the Bolshevik Revolution stranded these men along the length of the trans-Siberian Railway, President Woodrow Wilson dispatched 15,000 American troops, along with several Divisions of French, British, and Japanese regulars to rescue them. These "mercenar-

ies" were eventually rescued through a massive U.S. sealift from Vladivostok, forming the nucleus for the founding of Czechoslovakia in 1920.

During the Battle of New Orleans and War of 1812, America conferred hero status on Jean Lafayette, a mercenary and "privateer" (pirate).

In current terminology, "mercenary" has negative overtones offensive to Kayak's parents. Today, a mercenary is a hired gun, a psychopath who kills for pleasure, or someone seeking to plunder foreign treasures.

The "modern definition" doesn't fit the George Bacon I knew or the man known to the Hmong at Long Tieng.

Bacon came from a New England family steeped in history and traditions of the American Revolution and concepts of democracy. He was well-read on early doctrines calling for rebellion to create foundations for institutions of free speech, human rights, and universal suffrage.

Kayak was an avid reader. His heroes were warriors and leaders who fought for independence, framed the Constitution, or died in the defense and maintenance of freedom in the years during and following the American Revolution.

To Kayak, communism was a blight on humanity, just as excesses of capitalism were to Che Guevara. Although Kayak and Che were diametrically opposed politically, both men believed they were fighting for a greater cause. Each man died near small villages in forlorn parts of the world, far from home. Each considered himself a freedom fighter. Each fought for ideals, not for money. Each risked their lives when they could have rested on their laurels. Both were zealots.

Bacon died doing what he believed was morally right, not for coins in his pocket. True to lyrics from Barry Sadler's "Ballad of the Green Berets," which George quoted in our last meeting, Kayak "died for those oppressed."

It was for such oppressed, that George and many of us, went to places like Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Angola. Perhaps the real mercenaries in these dramas were politicians in Washington, Moscow, Hanoi, Beijing, Saigon, and Lisbon — men who foisted wars on their nations' youths, using high-minded slogans to cover ambitions which had nothing to do with liberty, democracy, or rights of man.

George Bacon, — "Kayak" — the man who died on the road to Cuimba on 13 February 1976, was an idealist, an adventurer, a soldier of fortune, an American, and an only son who laid down his life for what he thought was helping others less fortunate. That much I know.

(To be continued: How two old spies — an American and a Cuban — once on opposite sides of the Cold War's covert conflicts, shook hands and agreed to work together to locate George Bacon's remains after a quarter-century and against the odds of politics, nature, and logic.) ☞

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of the trigger guard holds all of these components together. The steel buttplate has a trapdoor for holding maintenance equipment. There is a sling mounting point on the left side of the buttstock and a corresponding front mounting point on the left side of the barrel jacket. In the Russian manner the slings were invariably made of webbing with leather end pieces.

A sliding catch in front of the trigger serves as the fire selector. Pushing it forward will produce full-auto fire and sliding it to the rear will permit semiautomatic fire. The sear is a pivoting bar with the sear at its rear end that is depressed by a spring-loaded pawl attached to the trigger. When the selector is set for semiautomatic fire, a disconnecter is driven upward into the bolt way. When the bolt impinges upon the disconnecter during its recoil stroke, the trigger pawl is moved off its step on the sear and the sear then rises to catch the bolt. To fire another round the trigger must first be released so the trigger pawl can rise and engage the sear once more. After the last shot has been fired the bolt will stop in the forward position.

The PPSH41 was first fielded with a spring-wound 71-round drum and most archival photographs from World War II

(and especially those taken during the battle for Stalingrad) show this drum attached to the weapon. No other World-War-II-era submachine gun was equipped with a feed mechanism of comparable capacity. However, feed drums are expensive and time-consuming to manufacture, relatively fragile and prone to malfunctions, difficult to load in a combat environment and somewhat awkward to carry and deploy. As a consequence, from the early part of 1944 onward the PPSH41 was provided with 35-round, curved, staggered-column, single-position-feed, detachable box-type magazines. Sturdy and reliable, the magazine bodies were made from 1mm-thick steel. Other modifications included strengthening the drum/magazine well to prevent it from spreading and altering the folding magazine latch to inhibit drums and magazines from dropping out while firing.

In common with all Soviet-designed small arms of this era, the PPSH41 is extremely easy to disassemble. Remove the magazine or drum and clear the weapon by retracting the bolt. Ease the bolt group forward under control. Press forward on the spring-loaded receiver catch at the rear and swing the upper receiver downward. Pull the cocking handle rearward and lift out the bolt group. To separate the upper and lower receivers the hinge pin assembly must be removed with a nylon or brass drift. Removal of the stock screw will permit separation of the buttstock from the trigger

housing group. No further disassembly is required.

Several other Eastern Bloc countries manufactured the PPSH41. In Hungary it was produced as the 48M, in North Korea as the Type 49 SMG and in China as the Type 50. It was also manufactured in Iran. The Chinese Type 50 differs in several ways from the Russian PPSH41. The tab at the rear of the lower receiver, through which the stock screw passes, was riveted in place on the Russian version and welded in place on the Chinese copy. Russian buffers are longer than the Chinese equivalent and cannot be used in the Type 50 without modification. Also, it is my understanding that the Chinese never used the 71-round drum. Russian 35-round magazines have reinforcing ribs on the sides; those of Chinese manufacture are slab-sided.

If success is to be measured by production figures, then the PPSH41 is the most successful submachine gun in the history of shoulder-mounted, pistol-caliber, fully automatic military small arms. A product of experience and expediency, and rough as a cob, it was nonetheless incredibly reliable (especially so with stick magazines) and instilled great fear into German troops on the Eastern Front. The key infantry weapons at Stalingrad were without doubt the PPSH41, the grenade and the sniper rifle. PPSH41s were most often deployed by submachine gun squads of eight men carried like ants on the back of a T-34 tank. ☒

Back To Basics*Continued from page 55*

Northern Iraq immediately following the Gulf War. PKK guerillas had been attacking the Turks, a NATO ally. The Turks were after the guerillas. The PKK felt that NATO should protect them from the Turks and vice-versa. They were really there to aid refugees and to keep people from dying, not put out ambushes in the hills. Just the same, bad blood brewed on both sides. "It was a classically complex situation. The rules of engagement kept changing. It's hard enough to keep up with this on the command level, but it also has to go right down to your 18-year-old Marine. It's not easy, but we do it. The experience of 30 years in Northern Ireland really showed."

Tommy This, And Tommy That

Talking to the enlisted men it wasn't too hard to see why. In other armies, the least amount of trust seems to be placed in the hands of the enlisted men and officers run willy nilly, micro-managing every aspect of exercise or deployment, hoping to head off a career-ending *faux-pas*. With the commandos, it's the opposite. The backbone of the force lies with the enlisted ranks. "We set the standard and drag everybody else up," we were told by Sergeant Tom Melvin, a 17-year veteran. "It's a really long time

from Marine to corporal and corporal to sergeant. By the time you've made the rank, you've got something like 10 years and three tours in North Ireland. There's a depth to our junior leadership you don't find elsewhere.

"In a place like Northern Ireland the first team to make contact is in command of the engagement. You don't have time to debate over who's in command. If it's a lance corporal, he calls the shots. That's when you need quality junior NCOs. In someplace like Kosovo, you can send out a Lance Corporal with a six-man patrol and be confident that he can deal with whatever comes up, be it a dispute over a cow or a grilling from the press. It's about trust. We don't have officers running hither and dither trying to keep a lid on everything and burning out as a result."

As with the officers, junior NCOs are hand-picked from the ranks. They are usually identified early in their service and good effort is made to retain them. When it's obvious that a Marine has hit his stride and can be counted on, he's sent down the leadership path. Time-in-grade promotions for just staying around do not exist. Promotions to leadership slots are not automatic but soldiers are compensated for time served. If a Marine wishes, he can stay forever a private. His pay book, however, will reflect his time served.

Once a Marine is well into his second hitch, real preparation for a leadership pro-

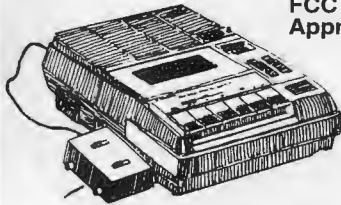
motion begins. It starts at the company level under the tutelage of senior NCOs. Regardless of MOS, all train to be Marine rifle squad leaders first, a lengthy and thorough process. In his ninth or 10th year of service he is handed off from his company and battalion sergeants to the NCO school at Lympstone. Here he begins a grueling, two-week selection course. If he passes, or survives as we were told, he advances to the nine-week core course. Upon completion, the new corporals return to their companies and immediately assume command duties and start preparing for sergeant, another five years or so down the road.

"Situations like Northern Ireland are complex, especially in the media age." Col. Bowkett concluded. "You see someone with a petrol bomb. Are you allowed to shoot him? The answer is no, unless he is directly threatening you or your squad. For all you know he's going to torch himself. Shoot him and you've got trouble. It takes very steady troops for this kind of thing. The difference between threat and non-threat is fine and can change in the blink of an eye. If I didn't trust that my troops were up to this, there's no way I'd be able to do my job. That's why we train as hard as we do and when we're called on we can get in fast and make our presence felt."

Jim Bartlett is a long-time SOF reader and has covered armed conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, Chechnya and downtown U.S.A. ☒

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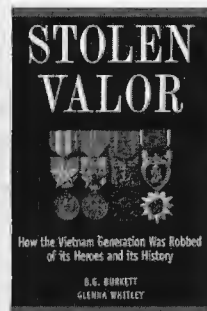
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A recipe for putting together a small, elite unit whose specialty would be audacity behind enemy lines, whose hallmarks would be competence and inestimable courage, would be to go to the world's best force already fitting that description, and skim the cream. Such was the history of the Selous Scouts, formed in 1973 at the height of the Rhodesian war by then Capt. Ron Reid-Daly. Reid-Daly was a veteran of the Rhodesian SAS with service in Malaya, and when the crack Rhodesian Light Infantry was formed in 1961 he became the first Regimental Sergeant-Major. Having worked his way through the ranks, he was OIC of the RLI support group when in 1973 Rhodesian Army Commander General Peter Walls asked him to form the Selous Scouts.

During the next seven years Reid-Daly molded the Selous Scouts in to the most feared counter-insurgency unit in Africa. With incredible daring, imagination and an unorthodox style this elite unit accounted for the lion's share of guerrilla casualties in the bitterly fought Rhodesian civil war. Their battle cry *pamwe chete* is Shona for "all together," and this intrepid regiment of the best African and European troops in Rhodesia took the war to the enemy, across borders and into the "safe havens" of the insurgents in neighboring countries who either tolerated or sponsored the guerrillas.

Their story is must reading for any student of military history, small-unit tactics or the post-colonial African wars. As good a writer as he was an innovative and exceptional unit leader, Reid-Daly has written a history that is almost encyclopedic in scope — some 600 pages — but a book that is almost impossible to put down. Well-illustrated with photos and maps, this volume will undoubtedly stand as the best soldier's story about soldiers ever written of the Rhodesian experience. And old saw says that the victors always write the history. Perhaps, but in this time it was a second-place winner who wrote it best. It is a cornerstone book for any military library, containing a selection of brutally honest war stories as good a read as there is to be found.

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Airborne Rangers, Delta & U.S. Navy SEAL

by Alan M. & Frieda W. Landau, Terry Griswold & D.M. Giangreco, Hans Halberstadt. MBI Publishing Company, P.O. Box 1, Osceola, WI 54020; phone: 800-826-6600. Reviewed by Frank Hopkins.

This composite work is an excellent volume, marred only by gaffs which bear the hallmark not of bad writing, but of poor editing. We will deal briefly with them first, as they were what jumped off the pages on this reviewer's first pass. The title, for instance, would lead one to believe it was a volume on U.S. Army Special Forces, but it is not: They are mentioned only in the context of Delta, leading the reader to think Delta and Special Forces are synonymous, which they are not. Delta is attached to SF at Ft. Bragg, of course, and Army SF provides a good proportion of Delta candidates — but so do the other services. We guess what the publisher meant to say with the title was "U.S. Special Operations Forces" since the scope of the book actually covers Rangers, Delta Force and SEALs. USAF SpecOps is covered only in the context of air assets the, supply other SpecOps units, and the confusion starts on the cover which shows a Budweiser, a Ranger tab and a Delta patch — which it identifies as "the icon for U.S. Special Operations, and Delta."

The weapons I.D. errors that riddle the book — a MAG-58 called a "German GPMG," an M3A1 Greasegun called an M3, an MP5 called an MP4, an MP5K called an M4 carbine called an M16, an M16A2 called an M16 — and ill-advised comments such as that the magazine is the handgrip on a rifle with the M203 attached, leave an ugly editor's thumbprint on an otherwise very worthwhile book. How does this reviewer divine there are editor-introduced mistakes? Because we know some of the authors of this volume — and we know editors in general.

Having niggled the publisher over some bad editing, we should hasten to reiterate that this volume is, otherwise, an excellent read and a most worthwhile addition to any

military library. The book is nearly 400 pages, with color photos throughout. The topics actually covered — Rangers, Delta and SEALs — are covered with well-balanced overviews that start as they should with a concise but very good history of the units concerned. Rangers, for instance, are covered from the Revolutionary War, through the War Between the States, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada and Panama — and today. Contemporary Ranger training and deployment are covered in good detail, and the various authors were given full access, so the photo work represented in this volume is outstanding — not just a reground assortment of PAO photos.

Likewise, the springboard for coverage



of the SEALs and Delta is their shorter but nonetheless colorful history. And the history in this volume is told as military history is best told, with war stories. Some of the best war stories for SEALs emanated from their extensive experience in Vietnam; some of the best and ongoing history of Delta is in today's headlines, as this unit which has evolved into one of the world's best anti terrorist forces is quietly and efficiently at work whether or not there is a current military engagement on the evening news.

With the caveat that one may want to have a copy of *Jane's* at hand if he is using this volume for serious research, we would give it two thumbs up for concept, coverage and good writing, all of which are well set off by excellent photographic coverage. ✘

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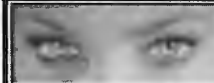
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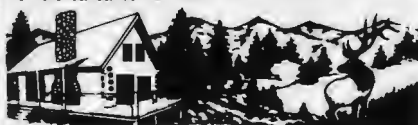
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The Party's Over

Secretary of Defense William Cohen has spent four fun-filled years wasting our money like no other public servant except Bill Clinton, who set the standard by blowing more than a billion dollars on presidential junkets alone.

Here we foolish citizens have been thinking the two bits from every tax dollar the Internal Revenue Service rips out of our hides to fund the Pentagon was spent defending America, not paying for Cohen & Cohorts' pleasure-tripping.

Well, think again! Because Cohen's been lapping the world like a dot-com CEO, staying at five-star *palazzi* while rubbing elbows with the rich and famous and throwing lots of power parties. One of those we popped for cost \$290,000, according to the Pentagon; but a Pentagon general says, "BS, \$750,000 is closer to the mark."

Cohen has used the fleet and the rest of our forces as though they were his private toys and boys. Last month when he took a bunch of pals — entertainers, sports stars, war heroes and old buddies — to Europe to "entertain the troops," the aircraft carrier *U.S.S. Harry Truman* was turned into Radio City for a day. A pilot whose flights were canceled said, "It was damn the hot operational missions, Cohen's USO Show must go on."

Meanwhile, Cohen and wife played MC in their matching, tailored "Top Gun" costumes that cost the country a cool two grand, chump change when compared with the millions we've contributed to run the Cohen Circus.

"Hollywood Cohen used U.S. warships like they belonged to the New York Yacht Club," says ex-tailhooker Mark Crissman, who quit the Navy because of such shenanigans. "He's done more to 'Pearl Harbor' the fleet than any SecDef and is clearly more concerned with photo ops and self-promotion than protecting America."

Sure, Cohen runs a \$310 billion corporation that burns through money as fast as a drunken oil sheik playing no-limit baccarat in Monte Carlo. But that doesn't mean he's entitled to the same perks as a sheik or the CEOs of General Electric or General Motors, who are at least accountable to their shareholders.

The years of being an inside-the-beltway taker on the government's teat seem to have addicted him to the fast lane. He's plumb forgotten he's a civil servant whose obligation as SecDef is to make sure every buck we give him goes toward our nation's fighting capability, not his playing Globo Host.



Col. David Hackworth (Ret.) also writes a syndicated weekly column titled "Defending America." "Hack" doesn't pull any punches and many liberal rags won't carry his writing. If your local paper falls into that category, call the editor and let him know you'd like to see "Defending America" on the Op-Ed page. It's syndicated by King Features, 235 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

If he'd have set the example and not hogged it up, maybe, just maybe, our generals and admirals would've followed suit instead of also acting like American royalty entitled to first-class everything. Then maybe our military would be shipshape and combat-ready rather than just a heart-beat away from stroking out.

If the troops had received even a portion of the dough Cohen's run through, morale wouldn't be at the bottom of the septic tank, and there'd be no need for him to dash from Beverly Hills to Bosnia to try to pump everyone up.

Our troops need everything from toilet paper to aircraft and vehicle spares and money for training to sharpen their dull combat edge, which when push comes to shove is what keeps them alive. They don't need Al Franken, Jewel, or Jerry Bruckheimer to thank them for "keeping our country strong" when they know they're out there hanging without the right stuff to pull off another Desert Storm.

Had Cohen looked at the homes and barracks at Fort Benning, Ga., and almost every other U.S. military base, he'd have seen how the other half lives. Had he gotten his nose out of the VIP room and talked to the troops, he'd have found out in a G.I. minute just how burned-out and ragged the force is.

At least Donald Rumsfeld, earmarked to replace Cohen-of-the-flying-costume, can slip on his "Top Gun" flight suit and wear it with pride because he earned it and those gold wings the hard way. But Rumsfeld's track record shouts that the party days are over and the Pentagon had better brace itself for a much-needed overhaul. It can't happen fast enough for all our good troops and their long-suffering families.

How ironic that the absentee ballots of our warriors who've been so badly treated in the Clinton years cost Cohen and cronies their jobs.

Many troops say, how sweet it is!

<http://www.hackworth.com> is the address of David Hackworth's home page.

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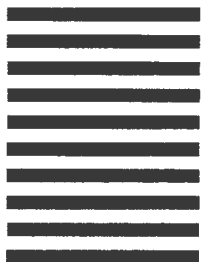
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